Introduction: Domains of Dread

The Mists reach from the darkest shadows of the multiverse, condemning the wicked and the brave to endless nightmares as prisoners of the Domains of Dread. These grim netherworlds compose the Ravenloft setting and are horrific backdrops for Dungeons & Dragons adventures steeped in fear. In these haunted realms, adventurers might oppose villainous Darklords, seek escape from the Mists, or experience any terrifying adventure you can imagine.

Dustin Panzino

Using This Book

This book explores the Domains of Dread and helps you create frightful adventures and heroes ready to confront horrors. It requires the Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and Monster Manual.

This introduction provides an overview of Ravenloft and its mysteries.

Chapter 1 presents subclasses, backgrounds, species, feats, and more for characters preparing to face nightmarish adventures.

Chapter 2 details prominent Domains of Dread, along with their Darklords and adventures within.

Chapter 3 provides tools for Dungeon Masters running horror adventures, including ways to develop frightful campaigns and rules for Haunted Bastions.

Chapter 4 explores how Dungeon Masters can create their own Domains of Dread.

Chapter 5 reveals allies and enemies that might appear in terrifying tales in the Mists or beyond.

The appendix details the tarokka deck and how to use it in your adventures.

Secrets of Ravenloft

Untold mysteries pervade the Domains of Dread, but these truths underpin the setting:

1: **Ravenloft Is Malleable.** The domains of Ravenloft are disconnected demiplanes. They don't share a world or a certain reality. Few truths connect them, and even inviolate facts—such as time or death—might change. The only constant is fear.

2: **The Dark Powers Reign.** Sinister forces known as the Dark Powers manipulate the Domains of Dread. Unknowable and omnipotent, the Dark Powers torment their captives for unfathomable reasons.

3: **Domains Imprison Darklords.** Each of Ravenloft's demiplanes imprisons a Darklord, a villain tormented by the Dark Powers. Domains ironically twist Darklords' desires, trapping these villains in cycles of dread and despair.

4: **The Mists' Clutches.** Constant fogs known as the Mists encircle each domain and might rise anywhere within. The Mists trap individuals within domains and make travel between domains uncertain. They sometimes drag inhabitants of other worlds into the Domains of Dread.

5: **Heroes Are Few.** Few oppose the villainy of the Darklords. The domains don't contain benevolent nations or untarnished heroic orders. Those who oppose evil can rely only on themselves, and they might inspire others or attract greater terrors.

6: **Isolated Islands.** The Domains of Dread are isolated from one another and the rest of the multiverse. Magic that facilitates travel between planes doesn't function unless the Dark Powers allow it, and most inhabitants know little of realms beyond. Nevertheless, anything from across the multiverse might appear in Ravenloft, albeit with an unsettling twist.

7: **Rule of Fear.** The mysteries of the Dark Powers and the Mists facilitate frightful adventures. Whatever inspires terror and aids your horror adventures is the will of the Dark Powers.

The Land of the Mists

Sylvain Sarrailh

This section provides you, the DM, an overview of Ravenloft. For details on specific Domains of Dread, see chapter 2.

Nightmare Logic

Ravenloft cultivates dread in defiance of logic. Domains don't abut one another, historians don't record coherent pasts, and communities cloak ignorance in strange traditions. The Domains of Dread operate on the same logic as nightmares: Whatever is the most terrifying is true. The Dark Powers, the Mists, and the nature of domains are purposefully mysterious. Mundane details and the lives of domain inhabitants are constructed on illusions and impossibilities. Should characters realize the surreality of the setting, those revelations only create a stronger sense of existential dread and suggest greater questions. Ultimately, none can ever fully understand the Domains of Dread.

The Dark Powers

The Dark Powers are faceless, godlike forces that manipulate reality within the Domains of Dread. Few even suspect their existence. These enigmatic forces help you create horror adventures and serve two complementary roles:

Narrative. The nature and goals of the Dark Powers are mysteries behind the scenes of the setting. Most adventures won't engage with these forces, but that doesn't prevent characters and Darklords from seeking to learn about them, particularly as a means to escape the Domains of Dread.

Practical. The Dark Powers provide a narrative veneer for DM intervention. They are why characters appear in Ravenloft, why the Mists can't be escaped, and why reality-defying strangeness occurs. The desires of the Dark Powers correspond with your needs in creating horror adventures.

The Mists

The Mists of Ravenloft appear without warning and move with eerie intention. Areas within the Mists are Heavily Obscured. No amount of wind can disperse the Mists.

The Mists serve the following roles:

Dark Clutches. The Mists serve the Dark Powers. They might steal residents of other worlds or entire locations from elsewhere in the multiverse and trap them in the Domains of Dread. Whether the Mists ever return what they claim depends on the whims of the Dark Powers.

Domain Borders. The Mists surround and isolate every Domain of Dread, preventing easy or predictable travel between them.

Transportation. The Mists can appear anywhere, claim individuals, and spirit them elsewhere in the Domains of Dread.

Few claimed by the Mists escape the horrors within

Pauline Voss

Mysteries of the Mists

The inhabitants of the Domains of Dread ascribe sinister stories to the Mists but accept the Mists as a natural part of their homeland. Those who travel between domains refer to their world as the Land of the Mists. Any supernatural happening or malicious force might be blamed on the Mists. Those who interact with the Mists—or who come from beyond—are typically met with suspicion.

Mist Talismans

Mist talismans are nonmagical objects that resonate with certain domains. They might be any object, and some might be aligned with multiple domains. By holding or wearing a Mist talisman and focusing on the domain it's associated with, a creature in the Mists can reach the intended domain after 1d6 hours of travel. Creatures following within 30 feet of a Mist talisman's bearer reach the same destination. Mist talismans associated with domains are detailed in chapter 2.

Mist talismans don't allow their bearers to escape domains with closed borders (see "Darklords"). Similarly, if the borders of the destination domain are closed, roll on the Wandering the Mists table to determine what happens.

Wandering the Mists

So long as a Darklord hasn't closed their domain's borders, creatures that enter the Mists might travel to other domains. When characters without a Mist talisman enter the Mists surrounding a domain, they emerge elsewhere after 1d6 hours of travel. Roll on or take inspiration from the Wandering the Mists table to determine where the Mists relocate characters.

Wandering the Mists

1d100	Characters Emerge from the Mists...
01-20	In a domain of your choosing.
21-40	After wandering for another 1d6 hours and rolling again on this table.

1d100	Characters Emerge from the Mists...
41-65	1d100 feet from where they entered.
66-75	A mile from where they entered at midnight of the following night.
76-85	Inside a structure within the domain they tried to leave, perhaps a cave, crypt, shed, or closet.
86-95	After encountering creatures within the Mists. Roll any die. If you roll an even number, a terrified Commoner appears. If you roll an odd number, a Mist Horror (see chapter 5) appears. Roll again on this table.
96-99	Where they entered, only to find the domain changed. Perhaps someone the characters knew is gone and no one remembers the person.
100	On a world on the Material Plane. After 1d6 hours, the Mists rise around them once more and return them to the domain they departed.

Domains

The Domains of Dread are untold numbers of individual demiplanes hidden in the Shadowfell. Some are created entirely by the Dark Powers, while others the Mists claimed from elsewhere in the multiverse and bear evidence of other worlds. Domains might change as the Dark Powers find new ways to torment their captives, with domains changing shape, merging, fading away, reappearing, and even repeating events.

The Domains of Dread share these features:

Domains Are Finite. Domains vary in size from countries or regions to a single city or structure.

Domains Are Isolated. Each domain is bordered by the Mists. Generally, domains don't share geography, and the residents and cultures of different domains don't influence one another.

Domains Hold Darklords. Each domain exists to contains a Darklord. Darklords exert some control over their domains, but they are tormented by their imprisonment. A domain without a Darklord has no purpose; if a domain's Darklord escapes or is permanently defeated, it might cease to exist.

Chapter 2 describes some of the most notorious Domains of Dread, while chapter 3 explores how to use domains in horror adventures. Use the methods in chapter 4 to create domains of your own.

Helge C. Balzer

Every domain torments a Darklord, a villain whose depravity attracted the attention of the Dark Powers and led to their imprisonment in the Domains of Dread. A Darklord might be anyone in a domain, from a national leader to an unassuming resident. Darklords share these qualities:

Darklords Are Evil. Each Darklord is the ultimate villain of a domain and the root of its terrors.

Darklords Are Prisoners. Darklords can't leave their domains. If a Darklord enters the Mists or uses another method to attempt escape, the Dark Powers return them to their domain. Even death rarely allows a Darklord to escape for long.

Darklords Are Tormented. Every domain torments its Darklord in an ironic way tied to their crimes, failures, or ambitions.

Darklords Influence Domains. Darklords have supernatural influence over their domains. A Darklord can close their domain's borders (see "Closing Domain Borders" below) and create other effects.

Darklords Are Active. Darklords might brood over their failures, but their attempts to achieve their depraved goals fuel their conflicts with characters. Liberally use Darklords in your adventures rather than saving them for climactic plots.

Darklords Don't Realize They're Darklords. Darklords generally don't realize they occupy a special place in the world. Their obsessions make them oblivious to the strangeness of their circumstances. Most don't suspect the nature of the Domains of Dread or the Dark Powers.

Closing Domain Borders. Darklords can close the borders of their domains at will. When this occurs, the Mists become dangerous (see the Darklord descriptions in chapter 2), and no matter how far a creature travels in the Mists, it eventually finds itself back in the domain it left. This makes leaving a domain impossible until the Darklord opens the borders or is defeated.

Chapter 2 presents stat blocks for numerous Darklords. Chapter 3 explores how to use Darklords in your horror adventures, while chapter 4 aids in creating your own Darklords.

Romain Kurdi

The inhabitants of the Domains of Dread fall into these categories:

Soulless Shells. Some domain inhabitants are creations of the Dark Powers. These beings are indistinguishable from normal creatures, living unremarkable lives and existing to reinforce whatever status quo the Dark Powers impose. At the will of the Dark Powers, these inhabitants might reappear in a domain even after being slain.

Bright Souls. Some beings are like those who populate other worlds in the multiverse. Some live unremarkable lives, while others awake to their homes' wrongness and fight their domains' evils.

Strangers. Those whom the Mists abduct from other worlds likely suspect the surreal nature of the Domains of Dread. These individuals often seek ways to escape the Mists and return home.

Death and Rebirth

The spirits of those who die in the Domains of Dread or the Mists don't travel to the afterlife. Those magically returned to life after being dead for at least 24 hours return with the grim realization that they're trapped within the Mists.

The souls of those who die and aren't returned to life are trapped within the Domains of Dread. The Dark Powers might eventually reincarnate these souls. Individuals who inherit a soul often look like their predecessor and might recall memories of their past lives.

Magic in the Mists

Some magic functions differently in the Domains of Dread. Characters who receive spells from otherworldly forces or patrons do so as normal, but the magic noted here functions in distinct ways:

Banishment. Aberrations, Celestials, Elementals, Fey, or Fiends aren't transported to different planes after the Banishment spell ends. Rather, they appear in a random different domain.

Escape. No spell allows escape from Ravenloft.

Etherealness. Magic that accesses the Border Ethereal, such as the Etherealness spell, functions as normal, but a creature that enters the Border Ethereal from a domain is pulled back into the domain it left on leaving the Ethereal Plane.

Extradimensional Spaces. Extradimensional spaces function as normal, but spells cast within them are subject to the same restrictions as magic cast within a domain.

Otherworldly Contact. Magic that allows contact with beings from other planes, such as the Commune spell, functions normally, but the domain's Darklord senses when someone in their domain casts such a spell. The Darklord can make themself the spell's target so that they become the one who is contacted and answer as they please.

Planar Boundaries. For the purposes of spell effects that change across or are blocked by planar boundaries (such as the Sending spell), each domain is considered its own plane.

Planar Travel. Magic that allows travel to other planes, such as the Astral Projection and Plane Shift spells, fails in the Domains of Dread. Gate can conjure beings into the Domains of Dread, but it doesn't allow them or others to escape. Magic that creates or sends creatures to demiplanes—such as the Demiplane, Maze, and Imprisonment spells—functions as normal.

Summoning. Magic that summons creatures or objects functions as normal, but whatever is summoned is a creation of the Dark Powers and might appear or behave in eerie ways.

Cosmetic Magic Effects

Magic effects produced in Ravenloft appear more sinister than they do elsewhere in the multiverse. For example, a creature conjured by Find Familiar or Find Steed might appear unnatural or deathly, or the Find the Path spell might cause a silent, childlike spirit to guide the caster to their destination. Describe such effects in whatever way reinforces a horrific atmosphere, drawing inspiration from the domain where your adventure takes place.

Leroy Steinmann

The Domains of Dread might seem surreal to individuals from other worlds, but for the residents of the Mists, Ravenloft's bizarre qualities are normal parts of reality.

Shared Delusion

Domain residents don't see incongruities in their existence. Societal pressure and soulless individuals controlled by the Dark Powers encourage inhabitants to embrace ignorance, dismiss coincidences, or doubt their senses. Residents of the Domains of Dread are no less perceptive than people elsewhere in the multiverse, but their home domains manipulate them into believing everything is as it should be, must be, and always was.

Those who call domain residents' reality into question are likely to be dismissed, distrusted, or worse. Individuals who speak of other worlds are broadly considered to be liars or delusional. Few individuals are open-minded to such concepts.

Adventurers

Ravenloft rarely gives rise to heroes. For the inhabitants of most domains, survival is the only act of courage they pursue. Those willing to confront the terrors of the Mists are typically strangers from other worlds or domain residents jarred from their apathy by traumatic events.

Adventurers find few peers in the Land of the Mists. Guilds of adventurers and shops catering to their needs generally don't exist. As a result, the challenge of confronting evil rests squarely with a few rare souls. Chapter 3 provides details on wanderers who might aid adventurers across domains.

Culture and Technology

Each domain has a distinct culture. Such cultures might be inspired by societies elsewhere in the multiverse or fantasies manufactured to torment a Darklord. Traditions are purportedly based on history, but few domains have coherent records of the past. Details of ages before a Darklord's arrival are usually vague or absent.

Similarly, every domain has its own level of technological advancement, the details of which are up to you. In some domains, firearms and clockwork devices are common, while others might feature cutting-edge weird science.

No cultural exchange occurs between the Domains of Dread. While evidence of one domain might appear in another, such things are viewed with suspicion.

Currency

Some domains mint their own gold, silver, and copper coins. Though these currencies bear different markings, merchants aren't particular about the designs stamped on their currency. Platinum and electrum coins rarely circulate through the domains, but they appear often enough—originating from hidden troves or ancient vaults—that no trader questions their value.

Andrey Kuzinskiy

Language

Common is the shared language of the Domains of Dread. Some domains might have unique words, and speakers from different domains might have distinctive accents, but individuals from different domains are understandable to one another. Other languages from the Player's Handbook are also known among the domains, but their rarity varies between domains as you see fit.

Religion

In many domains, residents worship stern but vague gods, and clergy have scant supernatural powers. Any deity, patron, or philosophy from anywhere in the multiverse might have followers in the Domains of Dread, though these followers' beliefs might be unconventional. The Dark Powers also breathe power into the faith of delusional zealots. Whether otherworldly forces or the Dark Powers empower faithful spellcasters is up to you.

Ezra. Mysteriously, worship of one god has its origins in the Mists. The god Ezra is depicted as a vaporous figure with dark, billowing hair and is believed to be able to manipulate the Mists. Ezra's holy symbol is a sprig of belladonna atop a silver kite shield. Ezra's followers across domains view the deity in contradictory ways. For some, Ezra is a stalwart guardian, while others perceive the god as a soul-stealing embodiment of the Mists. The truths of Ezra's existence and nature are mysteries.

Time and Dates

The Domains of Dread don't share a calendar. However, in most domains, locals measure time by "moons" rather than months. Each moon begins on the first night of a full moon and lasts a full lunar cycle. A year consists of twelve moons.

Although domains don't subscribe to a shared history, the populace of all domains inexplicably accept the current year as 735. Some local histories cleave to anomalous dates and methods of tracking years, but these are considered obsolete. No such irregularities exist in Barovia, though, where year 1 corresponds with the founding of Barovia by the von Zarovich family.

Travel

Most domain residents have little interest in domains beyond their own, and the nature of the Mists makes mercantile ventures and military conquests between domains essentially impossible. Nevertheless, rare individuals travel between the domains either at random, using Mist talismans (see "The Mists"), or by engaging mist-wandering guides. Those who enter the Mists by road, river, or sea usually emerge in a new domain by the same method. This means that domains with no coastline must be reached by methods other than ship, but also that travelers following roads rarely emerge from the Mists on the sea—though they might arrive inland within a domain surrounded by water.

Adventures by Level

Level	Adventure
2	The Tithe
3	The Ghost Hunter's Haunting
4	The Grand Masquerade
5	Isles of Agony
5	Lethal Lavender
6	Blood o' the Vine
7	Hungry for More
8	Trial of Hearts
9	Siege of Lekar
9	Treacherous Blood
10	Eyes of the Darklord
10	The Shadowborn Sword
11	Tower of Traitors
11	Vault of the Elder
12	Scrolls of the Dead
14	Shadow of the Black Rose
16	Secrets of Avernus

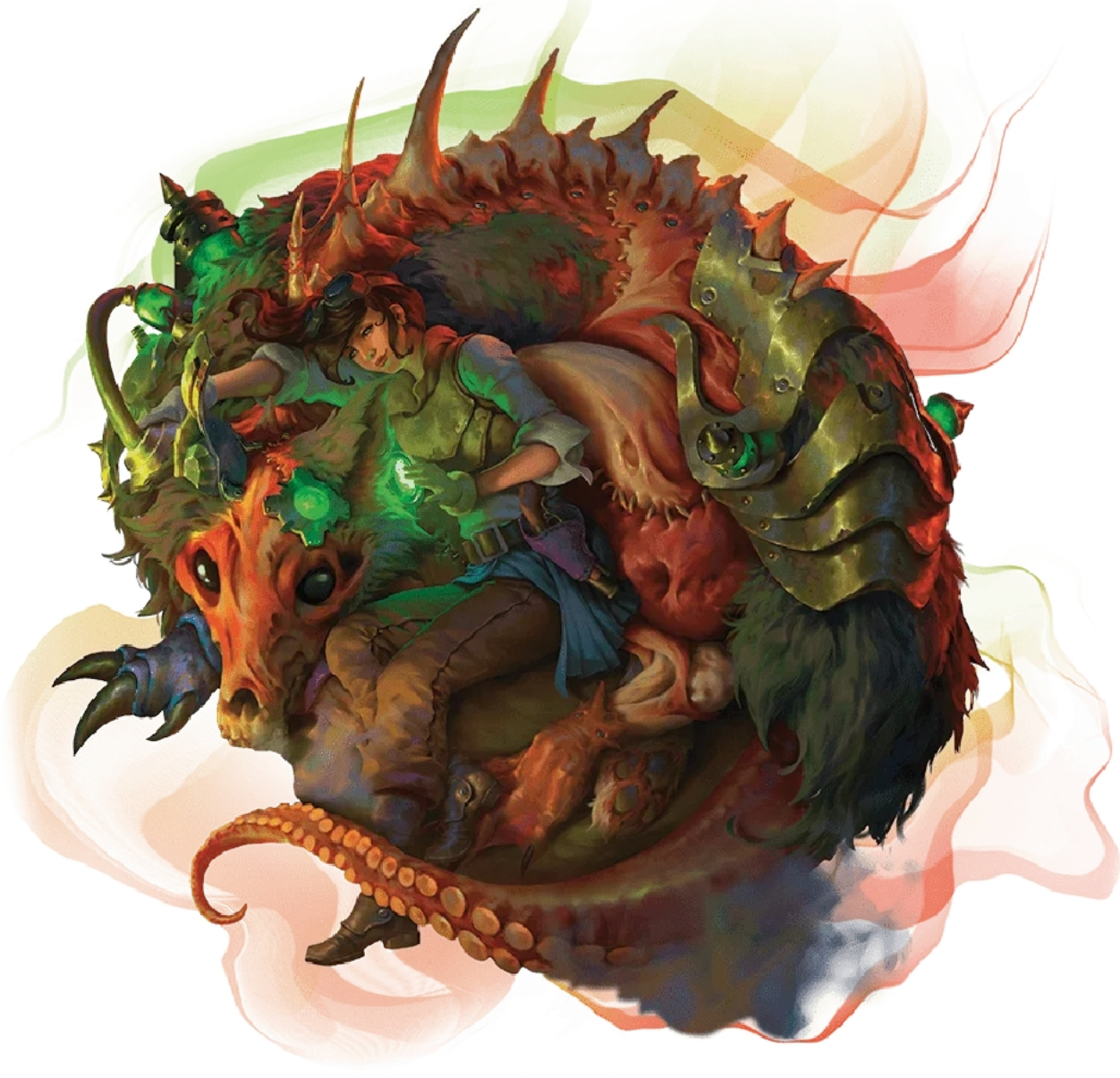
Pronunciation Guide

The Ravenloft Pronunciations table lists how to pronounce the names of prominent Domains of Dread, Darklords, and other residents of Ravenloft.

Ravenloft Pronunciations

Name	Pronunciation
Ankhtepot	AHNK-tay-paht
Azalin	AZ-lin
Barovia	buh-ROVE-ee-ah

Name	Pronunciation
Bluetspur	BLOOT-spoor
Borca	BOR-cah
Chakuna	chah-KOO-nah
Cthulhu	cuh-THOO-loo
Cyre	SEER
Darkon	DAHR-kon
Dementlieu	DAY-mon-lee-oo
Ebonbane	EB-on-bayne
Ez d'Avenir	EZ de-AV-neer
Falkovnia	fohl-KOHV-nee-uh
Forlorn	for-LORN
G'henna	gah-HEN-uh
Ghastria	GAS-tree-uh
Har'Akir	hahr-ah-KEER
Harkon Lukas	HAHR-kon LOO-kahs
Hazlan	HAZ-luhn
Hazlik	HAZ-lick
I'Cath	EE-cath
Innsmouth	INS-muth
Invidia	in-VID-ee-uh
Ivan Dilisnya	IGH-van dih-LIS-nee-uh
Ivana Boritsi	igh-VAHN-uh boor-ET-see
Kalakeri	KAH-lah-KIR-ee
Kalidnay	KAH-lid-nay
Kartakass	KAHR-ta-kuss
Keening	KEEN-eeng
Klorr	KLOR
Lamordia	lah-MOR-dee-uh
Loren Soth	LORE-en SOTH
Markovia	mar-KOH-vee-uh
Mordent	MOR-dent
Mother Lorinda	MUH-thur loh-RIN-duh
Niranjan	NEER-an-jan
Nova Vaasa	NOH-vah VAH-sah
Odaire	oh-DARE
Ramya Vasavadan	RAH-mee-yah VAH-sah-vah-dahn
Richemulot	REESH-moo-loh
Risibilos	ri-SI-bi-lohs
Saidra d'Honaire	SAY-druh dee-ON-air
Scaena	SKAY-nuh
Sea of Sorrows	SEE of SAHR-ohs
Shadowlands	SHAD-oh-lands
Sithicus	SITH-i-kus
Souragne	soo-RAH-nya
Staunton Bluffs	STON-tun BLUHFS
Strahd von Zarovich	STRAWD von zuh-ROH-vitch or ZAR-oh-vitch
Tepest	TEH-pest
Tovag	TOH-vahg
Valachan	VAHL-ah-kahn
Viktra Mordenheim	VIK-truh MOHR-den-highm
Vladeska Drakov	vlah-DES-kah DRAH-kov
Wilfred Godefroy	WIL-fred GOHD-froy
Zherisia	zair-IS-ee-uh



Ignatius Budi

Chapter 1: Character Options

The Weathermay-Foxgrove Twins, Gennifer and Laurie, along with Savra Sunstar and Ez d'Avenir, explore the infamous House on Gryphon Hill

Sean A. Murray

Whether for a night or an eternity, the Mists of Ravenloft pit heroes against their greatest nightmares. This chapter presents resources for players creating and playing characters in horror adventures, including new subclasses, backgrounds, species, and feats. These character options supplement the rules presented in the Player's Handbook.

Haunted Heroes

This section highlights ways you can create a character prepared to participate in horror adventures.

Before You Begin

Who is a horror adventure supposed to be scary for: you as the player or your character? Is it suspenseful like a mystery story or frightening like a slasher movie? What do you not want to see in a horror adventure? Align with your group's DM and other players on topics like these before participating in fear-focused adventures. Horror tales cover broad swaths of content. What some might find unsettling, others might shrug off. If you are the DM, consult the "Ensuring Fun for All" section of the Dungeon Master's Guide for guidance on setting expectations about your game.

Characters in horror adventures are often haunted by greater terrors than the monsters they face

Ignatius Budi

While playing a horror adventure, you participate in building a sense of dread. If your character laughs in the face of every danger, they undermine the adventure's atmosphere. Consider how past events might haunt your character and contribute to the mood of horror adventures.

Prepare to Be Scared

Knowing what frightens your character provides insight into their past and can motivate their behavior. A character's fear of cats might stem from a terrible sight they witnessed at their grandmother's home, while a fear of earthquakes might tie back to the experience of being trapped after a tremor. Consider two or three things that unsettle your character and how those fears shape your character's past and present.

Courage isn't the absence of fear, but how one deals with and overcomes it. Consider this in the context of your character. How might they react to a startling scene before rallying to overcome it? Does your character scream and flee, freeze in place, or jump recklessly into battle? Record a default fear reaction on your character sheet to help you respond when shocking events occur.

Fear Stays in the Game

Understand the difference between scaring characters and scaring players. For example, if you know another player has a fear of spiders, never employ that knowledge when contributing to a creepy scene. The Dungeon Master's Guide offers guidance (see "Hard and Soft Limits") to ensure your group has a method for raising concerns mid-game, in the event that things become too intense or go in directions you don't want to explore. If something in the game leads you to consider scaring or otherwise involving another player's character, ask that player's permission before acting. Their enjoyment is more important than shock value.

Sinister Secrets

Many characters in horror adventures have shadowy pasts: a harrowing experience that haunts their dreams, a bargain with sinister forces they keep hidden from others, or some other nefarious secret. How a character engages with such internal darkness can make for exciting conflicts. Be sure that your choices allow your character to remain a reliable part of your adventuring group, though, and not a near-villain other heroes only tolerate.

If you'd like your character's secret to have mechanical implications, Dark Gifts (detailed later in this chapter) grant characters supernatural abilities in return for sinister consequences.

Enjoying the Struggle

Not everyone can escape a horror story unscathed. While your character should do everything they can to triumph over challenges, any scars they gain along the way are part of what makes the horror meaningful and memorable.

Consider your goals as a participant in a horror adventure. Are you aiming to ensure the party's survival or just your character's? Or do you simply want to create a memorable experience for the other players? Let your goals evolve during an adventure. If these goals lead to greater tension, drama, or sacrifice in ways that echo your favorite horror tales—and that don't undermine other players' enjoyment of the game—embrace them. Your character's actions have great influence in creating exciting and impactful horror adventures.

Subclasses

This section presents seven new subclasses: the Reanimator (Artificer), College of Spirits (Bard), Grave Domain (Cleric), Hollow Warden (Ranger), Phantom (Rogue), Shadow Sorcery (Sorcerer), and Undead Patron (Warlock). The Artificer class is detailed in Eberron: Forge of the Artificer.

- Reanimator (Artificer)
- College of Spirits (Bard)
- Grave Domain (Cleric)
- Hollow Warden (Ranger)
- Phantom (Rogue)
- Shadow Sorcery (Sorcerer)
- Undead Patron (Warlock)

Backgrounds

This section presents backgrounds exploring origins suited to characters in horror adventures, using the same format presented in the Player's Handbook.

Two of the backgrounds, Mist Wanderer and Spirit Medium, offer Dark Gift feats rather than Origin feats; these feats appear at the end of the chapter. The Haunted One and Investigator backgrounds provide a choice between an Origin feat and a Dark Gift feat, so you can tailor your character's relationship to sinister forces in their past.

- Haunted One
- Investigator
- Mist Wanderer
- Spirit Medium

Species

Remarkable events and supernatural horrors have transformed individuals, creating species that spread throughout the Mists and the multiverse. A character might have been born as a member of one of the species in this section or transformed into one after harrowing events.

- Dhampir
- Hexblood
- Lupin
- Reborn

Feats

This section presents new feats tailored for characters adventuring through Ravenloft. Included are a handful of new feats in the Origin category, as well as a new type of feat: Dark Gift feats, which represent sinister bargains a character might make with mysterious forces.

Origin Feats

These feats are in the Origin category.

- Sharp Eye
- Survivor

Dark Gifts

The Dark Powers influence many who struggle within their clutches, tempting both the innocent and the ambitious with whispered promises. These sinister bargains come in dreams or mysterious visions. Their terms are always clear and their prices terrible.

With the DM's permission, whenever you would gain a feat from the Origin category, you can instead gain a Dark Gift feat. A DM can bestow a Dark Gift feat on a character during the course of an adventure, representing an insidious deal with a Darklord or some other malevolent force.

- Aberrant Anatomy
- Echoing Soul
- Gathered Whispers
- Living Shadow
- Mist Walker
- Second Skin
- Symbiotic Being
- Touch of Death
- Watchers

Artificer

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Plans Known	Magic Items	Cantrips	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots per Spell Level				
							1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+2	Spellcasting, Tinker's Magic	—	—	2	2	2	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Replicate Magic Item	4	2	2	3	2	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Artificer Subclass	4	2	2	4	3	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	4	2	2	5	3	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Subclass feature	4	2	2	6	4	2	—	—	—
6th	+3	Magic Item Tinker	5	3	2	6	4	2	—	—	—
7th	+3	Flash of Genius	5	3	2	7	4	3	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	5	3	2	7	4	3	—	—	—
9th	+4	Subclass feature	5	3	2	9	4	3	2	—	—
10th	+4	Magic Item Adept	6	4	3	9	4	3	2	—	—
11th	+4	Spell-Storing Item	6	4	3	10	4	3	3	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	6	4	3	10	4	3	3	—	—
13th	+5	—	6	4	3	11	4	3	3	1	—
14th	+5	Advanced Artifice	7	5	4	11	4	3	3	1	—
15th	+5	Subclass feature	7	5	4	12	4	3	3	2	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	7	5	4	12	4	3	3	2	—
17th	+6	—	7	5	4	14	4	3	3	3	1
18th	+6	Magic Item Master	8	6	4	14	4	3	3	3	1
19th	+6	Epic Boon	8	6	4	15	4	3	3	3	2
20th	+6	Soul of Artifice	8	6	4	15	4	3	3	3	2

Features | Variants | Info

Alchemist (TCE)
Alchemist (EFA)
Armorer (TCE)
Armorer (EFA)
Artillerist (TCE)
Artillerist (EFA)
Battle Smith (TCE)
Battle Smith (EFA)
Cartographer (EFA)
Reanimator (RHW)

Filter...

Artificer [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Intelligence

Hit Point Die: D8 per Artificer level
Hit Points at Level 1: 8 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Artificer Level: D8 + your Con. modifier, or, 5 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Constitution, Intelligence

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 2:* Arcana, History, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Perception, or Sleight of Hand.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' Tools, Tinker's Tools, and one type of Artisan's Tools of your choice

Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Studded Leather Armor, Dagger, Thieves' Tools, Tinker's Tools, Dungeoneer's Pack, and 16 GP; or (B) 150 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 1:* Arcana, History, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Perception, or Sleight of Hand.

Tool Proficiencies: Tinker's Tools

Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Source: *EFA*, page 7

Level 1: Spellcasting

You have learned how to channel magical energy through objects. See the Player's Handbook for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Artificer spells, which appear in the Artificer spell list later in the class's description.

Tools Required. You produce your Artificer spells through tools. You can use Thieves' Tools, Tinker's Tools, or another kind of Artisan's Tools with which you have proficiency as a Spellcasting Focus, and you must have one of those focuses in hand when you cast an Artificer spell (meaning the spell has an *M* component when you cast it).

Cantrips. You know two Artificer cantrips of your choice. Acid Splash and Prestidigitation are recommended.

Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can replace one of your cantrips from this feature with another Artificer cantrip of your choice.

When you reach Artificer levels 10 and 14, you learn another Artificer cantrip of your choice, as shown in the Cantrips column of the Artificer Features table.

Spell Slots. The Artificer Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your level 1+ spells. You regain all expended slots when you finish a Long Rest.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose two level 1 Artificer spells. Cure Wounds and Grease are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Artificer levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Artificer Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional Artificer spells until the number of spells on your list matches the number on the table. The chosen spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For example, if you're a level 5 Artificer, your list of prepared spells can include six Artificer spells of levels 1 and 2 in any combination.

If another Artificer feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Artificer spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change your list of prepared spells, replacing any of the spells there with other Artificer spells for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your Artificer spells.

Level 1: Tinker's Magic

You know the Mending cantrip.

As a Magic action while holding Tinker's Tools, you can create one item in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of yourself, choosing the item from the following list:

Ball Bearings	Flask	Pouch
Basket	Grappling Hook	Rope
Bedroll	Hunting Trap	Sack
Bell	Jug	Shovel
Blanket	Lamp	Spikes, Iron
Block and Tackle	Manacles	String
Bottle, Glass	Net	Tinderbox
Bucket	Oil	Torch
Caltrops	Paper	Vial
Candle	Parchment	
Crowbar	Pole	

See the rules for the item in the Player's Handbook. The item lasts until you finish a Long Rest, at which point it vanishes.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 2: Replicate Magic Item

You have learned arcane plans that you use to make magic items.

Plans Known. When you gain this feature, choose four plans to learn from the Magic Item Plans (Artificer Level 2+) table (see the Dungeon Master's Guide for the items' descriptions). Bag of Holding, Cap of Water Breathing, Sending Stones, and Wand of the War Mage are recommended. Whenever you gain an Artificer level, you can replace one of the plans you know with a new plan for which you qualify.

You learn another plan of your choice when you reach certain Artificer levels, as shown in the Plans Known column of the Artificer Features table. When you choose a plan to learn, you choose it from any Magic Item Plans table for which you qualify; your qualification is based on your Artificer level.

Creating an Item. When you finish a Long Rest, you can create one or two different magic items if you have Tinker's Tools in hand. Each item is based on one of the plans you know for this feature.

If a created item requires Attunement, you can attune yourself to it the instant you create it. If you decide to attune to the item later, you must do so using the normal process for Attunement.

When you reach certain Artificer levels specified in the Magic Items column of the Artificer Features table, the number of magic items you can create at the end of a Long Rest increases. Each item you create must be based on a different plan you know.

You can't have more magic items from this feature than the number shown in the Magic Items column of the Artificer Features table for your level. If you try to exceed your maximum number of magic items for this feature, the oldest item vanishes, and then the new item appears.

Duration. A magic item created by this feature functions as the normal magic item, except its magic isn't permanent; when you die, the magic item vanishes after 1d4 days. If you replace a plan you know with a new plan, any magic item created with the replaced plan immediately vanishes.

If an item that you created with this feature is a container, such as a Bag of Holding, and it vanishes, its contents harmlessly appear in and around its space.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use any Wand or Weapon created by this feature as a Spellcasting Focus in lieu of using a set of Artisan's Tools.

> **Crafting More Magic Items**
>
> The Replicate Magic Item feature isn't the only way for an Artificer to make magic items. The Dungeon Master's Guide provides rules for characters—not just Artificers—who want to make magic items of all sorts. Though many different characters can make magic items, Artificers can do it faster than others; each Artificer subclass improves a character's speed at making items of a certain category.
>
> When an Artificer crafts a magic item using the normal rules in the Dungeon Master's Guide, the character gains no special connection to that item. Class features that refer to items created by your Replicate Magic Item feature don't apply to items you craft by other means.

Magic Item Plans (Artificer Level 2+)

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Alchemy Jug	No
Bag of Holding	No
Cap of Water Breathing	No
Common magic item that isn't a Potion, a Scroll, or cursed*	Varies

*You can learn this option multiple times and must select a different item each time; each item selected counts as a different plan.

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Goggles of Night	No
Manifold Tool	Yes
Repeating Shot	Yes
Returning Weapon	No
Rope of Climbing	No
Sending Stones	No
Shield +1	No
Wand of Magic Detection	No
Wand of Secrets	No
Wand of the War Mage +1	Yes
Weapon +1	No
Wraps of Unarmed Power, +1	No

*You can learn this option multiple times and must select a different item each time; each item selected counts as a different plan.

Magic Item Plans (Artificer Level 6+)

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Armor +1	No
Boots of Elvenkind	No
Boots of the Winding Path	Yes
Cloak of Elvenkind	Yes
Cloak of the Manta Ray	Yes
Dazzling Weapon	Yes
Eyes of Charming	Yes
Eyes of Minute Seeing	No
Gloves of Thievery	No
Helm of Awareness	No
Lantern of Revealing	No
Mind Sharpener	Yes
Necklace of Adaptation	Yes
Pipes of Haunting	No
Repulsion Shield	No
Ring of Swimming	No
Ring of Water Walking	No
Sentinel Shield	No
Spell-Refueling Ring	Yes
Wand of Magic Missiles	No
Wand of Web	Yes
Weapon of Warning	Yes

Magic Item Plans (Artificer Level 10+)

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Armor of Resistance	Yes
Dagger of Venom	No
Elven Chain	No
Ring of Feather Falling	Yes
Ring of Jumping	Yes
Ring of Mind Shielding	Yes
Shield, +2	No
Uncommon Wondrous Item that isn't cursed*	Varies
Wand of the War Mage, +2	Yes

*You can learn this option multiple times and must select a different item each time; each item selected counts as a different plan.

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Weapon, +2	No
Wraps of Unarmed Power, +2	No

*You can learn this option multiple times and must select a different item each time; each item selected counts as a different plan.

Magic Item Plans (Artificer Level 14+)

Magic Item Plan	Attunement
Armor, +2	No
Arrow-Catching Shield	Yes
Flame Tongue	Yes
Rare Wondrous Item that isn't cursed*	Varies
Ring of Free Action	Yes
Ring of Protection	Yes
Ring of the Ram	Yes

*You can learn this option multiple times and must select a different item each time; each item selected counts as a different plan.

Level 3: Artificer Subclass

EFA p10

You gain an Artificer subclass of your choice. The Alchemist, Armorer, Artillerist, Battle Smith, and Cartographer subclasses are detailed after this class's description. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Artificer levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Artificer level or lower.

Reanimator

RHW

Reassemble Corpses and Raise the Dead

Reanimators defy the laws of nature in pursuit of gruesome experiments. These grim Artificers stitch together servants from disparate corpses, use foul magic to strengthen the living, and transform the art of necromancy into a terrifying science.

Level 3: Reanimator Spells

RHW

When you reach an Artificer level specified in the Reanimator Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Reanimator Spells

Artificer Level	Spells
3	False Life, Spare the Dying, Witch Bolt
5	Blindness/Deafness, Enhance Ability
9	Animate Dead, Lightning Bolt
13	Blight, Death Ward
17	Antilife Shell, Raise Dead

Level 3: Reanimator's Skill Set

RHW

You gain the following benefits.

Jolt to Life. When you cast Spare the Dying, you can modify the spell so that it sends a jolt of electricity through the target, reviving it. The target regains a number of Hit Points equal to your Artificer level, and each creature of your choice in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the target makes a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC, taking 2d4 Lightning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

You can modify the spell this way a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest. The Lightning damage of this feature increases by 1d4 when you reach Artificer levels 11 (3d4) and 17 (4d4).

Reanimator's Tools. You gain proficiency with Alchemist's Supplies. If you already have this proficiency, you gain proficiency with one other type of Artisan's Tools of your choice.

Level 3: Reanimated Companion

RHW

Using Tinker's Tools or another type of Artisan's Tools with which you have proficiency, you can take a Magic action to create a Reanimated Companion through the power of necromancy and science. The companion manifests in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you. You determine the companion's appearance; your choices don't affect the companion's game statistics.

The companion is Friendly to you and your allies and obeys you. It lasts until you finish a Long Rest or until you take a Magic action to dismiss it early, at which point it harmlessly collapses into a pile of viscera. It immediately drops to 0 Hit Points and dies (triggering its Death Burst trait) if you die.

Once you create a companion, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest or expend a spell slot to create one. You can have only one companion at a time and can't create one while your companion is present.

The Companion in Combat. In combat, the companion acts during your turn. It can move and take its Reaction on its own, but the only action it takes is the Dodge action unless you take a Bonus Action to command it to take an action. If you have the Incapacitated condition, the companion acts on its own and isn't limited to the Dodge action.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement EFA p10

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Artificer levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Subclass feature EFA p8

You gain a feature from your Artificer Subclass.

Level 5: Strange Modifications RHW

Whenever you create a Reanimated Companion, it gains one of the following options of your choice; choose when you create the companion.

Arcane Conduit. You can cast spells as though you were in the companion's space, but you must use your own senses. Once per turn, when you cast an Artificer spell from the Evocation or Necromancy school and deal damage while your companion is within 120 feet of you, you can add your Intelligence modifier to one damage roll of that spell.

Ferocity. The damage die of the companion's Dreadful Swipe increases to 1d6.

Level 6: Magic Item Tinker EFA p10

Your Replicate Magic Item feature gains the following options.

Charge Magic Item. As a Bonus Action, you can touch a magic item within 5 feet of yourself that you created with Replicate Magic Item and that uses charges. You expend a level 1+ spell slot and recharge the item. The number of charges the item regains is equal to the level of spell slot expended.

Drain Magic Item. As a Bonus Action, you can touch a magic item within 5 feet of yourself that you created with Replicate Magic Item and cause the item to vanish, converting its magical energy into a spell slot. The slot is level 1 if the item is Common or level 2 if the item is Uncommon or Rare. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest. Any spell slot you create with this feature vanishes when you finish a Long Rest.

Transmute Magic Item. As a Magic action, you can touch one magic item within 5 feet of yourself that you created with Replicate Magic Item and transform it into a different magic item. The resulting item must be based on a magic item plan you know. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 7: Flash of Genius EFA p10

When you or a creature you can see within 30 feet of you fails an ability check or a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to add a bonus to the roll, potentially causing it to succeed. The bonus equals your Intelligence modifier (minimum of +1).

You can take this Reaction a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement EFA p10

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 9: Subclass feature EFA p8

You gain a feature from your Artificer Subclass.

Level 9: Improved Reanimation RHW

The damage of your Reanimated Companion's Death Burst increases to 4d4. Necrotic damage dealt by your companion ignores Resistance.

Level 9: Macabre Modifications RHW

You experiment and alter your companion further. Whenever you create a Reanimated Companion, the companion now gains two options for Strange Modifications, instead of one. Additionally, when picking options for Strange Modifications, you can also choose from the following options.

Bloated. The companion becomes Large. Whenever it hits a Large or smaller creature with its Dreadful Swipe action, that creature is pushed up to 10 feet away from the companion. Additionally, you can add your Intelligence modifier to the damage dealt by the companion's Death Burst.

Gaunt. The companion's Speed increases to 45 feet, and it gains a Climb Speed equal to its Speed. It can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check. In addition, whenever a creature of your choice starts its turn within a 10-foot Emanation originating from your companion, the creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or have the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn.

Moist. The companion gains a Swim Speed equal to its Speed, and it can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so. In addition, whenever the companion is hit by an attack roll from a creature within 10 feet of itself, the attacker takes Acid damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Level 10: Magic Item Adept EFA p10

You can now attune to up to four magic items at once.

Level 11: Spell-Storing Item EFA p11

Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can touch one Simple or Martial weapon or one item that you can use as a Spellcasting Focus, and you store a spell in it, choosing a level 1, 2, or 3 Artificer spell that has a casting time of an action and doesn't require a Material component that is consumed by the spell (you needn't have the spell prepared).

While holding the object, a creature can take a Magic action to produce the spell's effect from it, using your spellcasting ability modifier. If the spell requires Concentration, the creature must concentrate. Once a creature has used the object to produce the spell's effect, the object can't be used this way again until the start of the creature's next turn.

The spell stays in the object until it's been used a number of times equal to twice your Intelligence modifier (minimum of twice) or until you use this feature again to store a spell in an object.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement EFA p10

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 14: Advanced Artifice EFA p11

You gain the following benefits.

Magic Item Savant. You can now attune to up to five magic items at once.

Refreshed Genius. When you finish a Short Rest, you regain one expended use of your Flash of Genius feature.

Level 15: Subclass feature EFA p8

You gain a feature from your Artificer Subclass.

Level 15: Refined Reanimation RHW

You have mastered the science of revivification, granting you the following benefits.

Facilitated Revival. You can cast Raise Dead once without expending a spell slot and without Material components, provided you use Tinker's Tools or another type of Artisan's Tools with which you have proficiency as the Spellcasting Focus. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

Life Transfer. You can siphon the animating magic of your Reanimated Companion to bolster yourself. When you or your companion takes damage, you can take a Reaction to gain a number of Hit Points equal to your companion's current Hit Points. The companion then immediately drops to 0 Hit Points and dies (triggering its Death Burst trait).

Superior Modifications. Whenever you create a Reanimated Companion, the companion now gains three options for Strange Modifications.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement EFA p10

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 18: Magic Item Master EFA p11

You can now attune to up to six magic items at once.

Level 19: Epic Boon EFA p11

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Energy Resistance is recommended.

Level 20: Soul of Artifice EFA p11

You have developed a mystical connection to your magic items, which you can draw on for aid. You gain the following benefits.

Cheat Death. If you're reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright, you can disintegrate any number of Uncommon or Rare magic items created by your Replicate Magic Item feature. If you do so, your Hit Points instead change to a number equal to 20 times the number of magic items disintegrated.

Magical Guidance. When you finish a Short Rest, you regain all expended uses of your Flash of Genius if you have Attunement to at least one magic item.

Bard

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Bardic Die	Cantrips	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots per Spell Level							
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+2	Bardic Inspiration, Spellcasting	1d6	2	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Expertise, Jack of All Trades	1d6	2	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Bard Subclass	1d6	2	6	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	1d6	3	7	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Font of Inspiration	1d8	3	9	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+3	Subclass Feature	1d8	3	10	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+3	Countercharm	1d8	3	11	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	1d8	3	12	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+4	Expertise	1d8	3	14	4	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+4	Magical Secrets	1d10	4	15	4	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+4	—	1d10	4	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	1d10	4	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	+5	—	1d10	4	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
14th	+5	Subclass Feature	1d10	4	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
15th	+5	—	1d12	4	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	1d12	4	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
17th	+6	—	1d12	4	19	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	Superior Inspiration	1d12	4	20	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	Epic Boon	1d12	4	21	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Words of Creation	1d12	4	22	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1

Features | Variants | Info

Creation (TCE) | Filter...

Dance (PHB'24) | Eloquence (TCE) | Glamour (XGE) | Glamour (PHB'24) | Lore (PHB'14) | Lore (PHB'24) | Moon (FRHoF) | Spirits (VRGR) | Spirits (RHW) | Swords (XGE) | Valor (PHB'14) | Valor (PHB'24) | Whispers (XGE)

Bard [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Charisma

Hit Point Die: D8 per Bard level
Hit Points at Level 1: 8 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Bard Level: D8 + your Con. modifier, or, 5 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Dexterity, Charisma

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose any 3 skills* (see chapter 1).

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons

Tool Proficiencies: Choose three Musical Instruments

Armor Training: Light armor

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Leather Armor, 2 Dagger, Musical Instrument of your choice, Entertainer's Pack, 19 GP; or (B) 90 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose any 1 skill* (see chapter 1).

Tool Proficiencies: Choose one Musical Instrument

Armor Training: Light armor

Source: *PHB'24*, page 58. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Bardic Inspiration

PHB'24 p59

You can supernaturally inspire others through words, music, or dance. This inspiration is represented by your Bardic Inspiration die, which is a d6.

Using Bardic Inspiration. As a Bonus Action, you can inspire another creature within 60 feet of yourself who can see or hear you. That creature gains one of your Bardic Inspiration dice. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time.

Once within the next hour when the creature fails a D20 Test, the creature can roll the Bardic Inspiration die and add the number rolled to the d20, potentially turning the failure into a success. A Bardic Inspiration die is expended when it's rolled.

Number of Uses. You can confer a Bardic Inspiration die a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

At Higher Levels. Your Bardic Inspiration die changes when you reach certain Bard levels, as shown in the Bardic Die column of the Bard Features table. The die becomes a d8 at level 5, a d10 at level 10, and a d12 at level 15.

Level 1: Spellcasting

PHB'24 p59

You have learned to cast spells through your bardic arts. See chapter 7 for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Bard spells, which appear in the Bard spell list later in the class's description.

Cantrips. You know two cantrips of your choice from the Bard spell list. Dancing Lights and Vicious Mockery are recommended.

Whenever you gain a Bard level, you can replace one of your cantrips with another cantrip of your choice from the Bard spell list.

When you reach Bard levels 4 and 10, you learn another cantrip of your choice from the Bard spell list, as shown in the Cantrips column of the Bard Features table.

Spell Slots. The Bard Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your level 1+ spells. You regain all expended slots when you finish a Long Rest.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose four level 1 spells from the Bard spell list. Charm Person, Color Spray, Dissonant Whispers, and Healing Word are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Bard levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Bard Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional spells from the Bard spell list until the number of spells on your list matches the number on the table. The chosen spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For example, if you're a level 3 Bard, your list of prepared spells can include six spells of levels 1 and 2 in any combination.

If another Bard feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those spells don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Bard spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you gain a Bard level, you can replace one spell on your list with another Bard spell for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your Bard spells.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use a Musical Instrument as a Spellcasting Focus for your Bard spells.

Level 2: Expertise

You gain Expertise in two of your skill proficiencies of your choice. Performance and Persuasion are recommended if you have proficiency in them.

At Bard level 9, you gain Expertise in two more of your skill proficiencies of your choice.

Level 2: Jack of All Trades

You can add half your Proficiency Bonus (round down) to any ability check you make that uses a skill proficiency you lack and that doesn't otherwise use your Proficiency Bonus.

For example, if you make a Strength (Athletics) check and lack Athletics proficiency, you can add half your Proficiency Bonus to the check.

> **A Bard's Repertoire**
> Does your Bard beat a drum while chanting the deeds of ancient heroes? Strum a lute while crooning romantic tunes? Perform arias of stirring power? Recite dramatic monologues from classic tragedies? Use the rhythm of a folk dance to coordinate the movement of allies in battle? Compose naughty limericks?
>
> When you play a Bard, consider the style of artistic performance you favor, the moods you might invoke, and the themes that inspire your own creations. Are your poems inspired by moments of natural beauty, or are they brooding reflections on loss? Do you prefer lofty hymns or rowdy tavern songs? Are you drawn to laments for the fallen or celebrations of joy? Do you dance merry jigs or perform elaborate interpretive choreography? Do you focus on one style of performance or strive to master them all?

Level 3: Bard Subclass

You gain a Bard subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Bard levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Bard level or lower.

College of Spirits RHW

Call Forth Spirits from Beyond the Grave

Bards of the College of Spirits conjure legendary spirits to change the world. But such entities are capricious, and what a Bard summons isn't always entirely under their control.

Level 3: Channeler RHW

You learn how to contact spirits beyond the grave, letting their power and knowledge flow through you. You gain the following benefits.

Guiding Whispers. You know the Guidance cantrip. It has a range of 60 feet when you cast it.

Spiritual Focus. You employ tools that aid you in channeling spirits. You gain a Gaming Set (playing cards). You have proficiency with this Gaming Set, and you can use it or one of the following items as a Spellcasting Focus for your Bard spells: Arcane Focus (crystal or orb), Candle, or Ink Pen.

Level 3: Spirits from Beyond RHW

You can call forth spirits of the dead to empower you and your allies. When you take a Bonus Action to give a creature a Bardic Inspiration die, you can call forth the powers of a random spirit. To determine the spirit you channel, roll the Bardic Inspiration die and refer to the Spirits from Beyond table. The spirit remains channeled until you unleash it or until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Controlled Channeling. As a Bonus Action, you can expend a use of your Bardic Inspiration and channel a specific spirit. When you do so, choose the spirit from the Spirits from Beyond table rather than rolling. The chosen spirit's corresponding number must be less than or equal to the highest number on your Bardic Inspiration die; for example, if your Bardic Inspiration die is a d8, you can choose to channel any spirit up to (and including) the Shade.

Unleashing a Spirit. As a Magic action, you can unleash one of your channeled spirits. Choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself as the spirit's target. The spirit then takes effect; if a spirit's effect requires a saving throw, the DC equals your Bard spell save DC.

Spirits from Beyond

Bardic Insp. Die	Spirit and Unleash Effect
1	Beloved. The target regains Hit Points equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die plus your Charisma modifier.
2	Sharpshooter. The target takes Force damage equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die plus your Charisma modifier.
3	Avenger. Until the end of your next turn, any creature that hits the target with a melee attack roll takes Force damage equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die.
4	Renegade. The target can immediately take a Reaction to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.
5	Fortune Teller. The target has Advantage on D20 Tests until the start of your next turn.
6	Wayfarer. The target gains Temporary Hit Points equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die plus your Bard level. While the target has these Temporary Hit Points, its Speed increases by 10 feet.
7	Trickster. The target makes a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes Psychic damage equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die and has the Charmed condition until the start of your next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage only.

Bardic Insp. Die	Spirit and Unleash Effect
8	Shade. The target has the Invisible condition until the end of its next turn or until the target makes an attack roll, deals damage, or casts a spell. When the invisibility ends, each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take Necrotic damage equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die.
9	Arsonist. The target makes a Dexterity saving throw, taking Fire damage equal to four rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.
10	Coward. The target and each creature of your choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn. While a creature is Frightened, its Speed is halved (round down), and it can take either an action or a Bonus Action, not both.
11	Brute. Each creature of your choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the target makes a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes Thunder damage equal to three rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die and has the Prone condition. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only.
12	Priest. The target regains Hit Points equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die, and one of the following conditions of your choice ends on the target: Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, or Stunned.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p61

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Bard levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Font of Inspiration PHB'24 p61

You now regain all your expended uses of Bardic Inspiration when you finish a Short or Long Rest.

In addition, you can expend a spell slot (no action required) to regain one expended use of Bardic Inspiration.

Level 6: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p61

You gain a feature from your Bard Subclass.

Level 6: Empowered Channeling RHW

Your ability to channel spirits improves. You gain the following benefits.

Power from Beyond. Once per turn, when you cast a Bard spell with a spell slot that deals damage or restores Hit Points, roll 1d6. You gain a bonus equal to the number rolled to one of the spell's damage rolls or to the total Hit Points the spell restores.

Spiritual Manifestation. You always have the Spirit Guardians spell prepared. You can cast the spell once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in this way when you finish a Long Rest.

Whenever you cast the spell, you can modify it so the spirits also guard against worldly threats. When you cast the spell in this way, you and allies within the spell's Emanation have Half Cover. Once you modify the spell in this way, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Level 7: Countercharm PHB'24 p61

You can use musical notes or words of power to disrupt mind-influencing effects. If you or a creature within 30 feet of you fails a saving throw against an effect that applies the Charmed or Frightened condition, you can take a Reaction to cause the save to be rerolled, and the new roll has Advantage.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p61

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 9: Expertise PHB'24 p61

You gain Expertise in two of your Skill Proficiencies of your choice.

Level 10: Magical Secrets PHB'24 p61

You've learned secrets from various magical traditions. Whenever you reach a Bard level (including this level) and the Prepared Spells number in the Bard Features table increases, you can choose any of your new prepared spells from the Bard, Cleric, Druid, and Wizard spell lists, and the chosen spells count as Bard spells for you (see a class's section for its spell list). In addition, whenever you replace a spell prepared for this class, you can replace it with a spell from those lists.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p61

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 14: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p61

You gain a feature from your Bard Subclass.

Level 14: Mystical Connection RHW

You gain mastery over the spirits you call forth. Whenever you roll on the Spirits from Beyond table, you can roll the die twice and choose which of the two effects to bestow. If you roll the same number on both dice, you can instead choose any effect on the table.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p61

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 18: Superior Inspiration PHB'24 p61

When you roll Initiative, you regain expended uses of Bardic Inspiration until you have two if you have fewer than that.

Level 19: Epic Boon PHB'24 p61

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Spell Recall is recommended.

Level 20: Words of Creation PHB'24 p61

You have mastered two of the Words of Creation: the words of life and death. You therefore always have the Power Word Heal and Power Word Kill spells prepared. When you cast either spell, you can target a second creature with it if that creature is within 10 feet of the first target.

Cleric

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Channel Divinity	Cantrips	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots per Spell Level								
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+2	Spellcasting, Divine Order	—	3	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Channel Divinity	2	3	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Cleric Subclass	2	3	6	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	2	4	7	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Sear Undead	2	4	9	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+3	Subclass Feature	3	4	10	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+3	Blessed Strikes	3	4	11	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	3	4	12	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+4	—	3	4	14	4	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+4	Divine Intervention	3	5	15	4	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+4	—	3	5	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	3	5	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	+5	—	3	5	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
14th	+5	Improved Blessed Strikes	3	5	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
15th	+5	—	3	5	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	3	5	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
17th	+6	Subclass Feature	3	5	19	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	—	4	5	20	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	Epic Boon	4	5	21	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Greater Divine Intervention	4	5	22	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1

Features | Variants | Info

Arcana (SCAG)
Death (DMG'14)
Forge (XGE)
Grave (XGE)
Grave (RHW)
Knowledge (PHB'14)
Knowledge (FRHoF)
Life (PHB'14)
Life (PHB'24)
Light (PHB'14)
Light (PHB'24)
Nature (PHB'14)
Order (TCE)
Peace (TCE)
Tempest (PHB'14)
Trickery (PHB'14)
Trickery (PHB'24)
Twilight (TCE)
War (PHB'14)
War (PHB'24)
(5 more not shown)

Filter...

Cleric [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Wisdom

Hit Point Die: D8 per Cleric level
Hit Points at Level 1: 8 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Cleric Level: D8 + your Con. modifier, or, 5 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Wisdom, Charisma

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 2:* History, Insight, Medicine, Persuasion, or Religion.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons

Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Chain Shirt, Shield, Mace, Holy Symbol, Priest's Pack, 7 GP; or (B) 110 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.
Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Source: *PHB'24*, page 68. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Spellcasting

PHB'24 p70

You have learned to cast spells through prayer and meditation. See chapter 7 for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Cleric spells, which appear on the Cleric spell list later in the class's description.

Cantrips. You know three cantrips of your choice from the Cleric spell list. Guidance, Sacred Flame, and Thaumaturgy are recommended.

Whenever you gain a Cleric level, you can replace one of your cantrips with another cantrip of your choice from the Cleric spell list.

When you reach Cleric levels 4 and 10, you learn another cantrip of your choice from the Cleric spell list, as shown in the Cantrips column of the Cleric Features table.

Spell Slots. The Cleric Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your level 1+ spells. You regain all expended slots when you finish a Long Rest.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose four level 1 spells from the Cleric spell list. Bless, Cure Wounds, Guiding Bolt, and Shield of Faith are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Cleric levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Cleric Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional spells from the Cleric spell list until the number of spells on your list matches the number on the table. The chosen spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For example, if you're a level 3 Cleric, your list of prepared spells can include six spells of levels 1 and 2 in any combination.

If another Cleric feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those spells don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Cleric spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change your list of prepared spells, replacing any of the spells there with other Cleric spells for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for your Cleric spells.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use a Holy Symbol as a Spellcasting Focus for your Cleric spells.

Level 1: Divine Order

PHB'24 p70

You have dedicated yourself to one of the following sacred roles of your choice.

Protector. Trained for battle, you gain proficiency with Martial weapons and training with Heavy armor.

Thaumaturge. You know one extra cantrip from the Cleric spell list. In addition, your mystical connection to the divine gives you a bonus to your Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) checks. The bonus equals your Wisdom modifier (minimum of +1).

Level 2: Channel Divinity

You can channel divine energy directly from the Outer Planes to fuel magical effects. You start with two such effects: Divine Spark and Turn Undead, each of which is described below. Each time you use this class's Channel Divinity, choose which Channel Divinity effect from this class to create. You gain additional effect options at higher Cleric levels.

You can use this class's Channel Divinity twice. You regain one of its expended uses when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest. You gain additional uses when you reach certain Cleric levels, as shown in the Channel Divinity column of the Cleric Features table.

If a Channel Divinity effect requires a saving throw, the DC equals the spell save DC from this class's Spellcasting feature.

Divine Spark. As a Magic action, you point your Holy Symbol at another creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself and focus divine energy at it. Roll 1d8 and add your Wisdom modifier. You either restore Hit Points to the creature equal to that total or force the creature to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes Necrotic or Radiant damage (your choice) equal to that total. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage (round down).

You roll an additional d8 when you reach Cleric levels 7 (2d8), 13 (3d8), and 18 (4d8).

Turn Undead. As a Magic action, you present your Holy Symbol and censure Undead creatures. Each Undead of your choice within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its save, it has the Frightened and Incapacitated conditions for 1 minute. For that duration, it tries to move as far from you as it can on its turns. This effect ends early on the creature if it takes any damage, if you have the Incapacitated condition, or if you die.

Level 3: Cleric Subclass

You gain a Cleric subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Cleric levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Cleric level or lower.

Grave Domain RHW

Embody Deific Forces of Death

The Grave Domain concerns itself with the boundary between life and death. To those who tap into this domain's power, death is a natural and inevitable part of the multiverse. Such Clerics seek to destroy undead and shepherd spirits.

The magic of this domain also allows these Clerics to stave off death for a time. But this is merely a delay of death, not a denial of it, for the grave will always claim its due.

Level 3: Grave Domain Spells RHW

Your connection to this divine domain ensures you always have certain spells ready. When you reach a Cleric level specified in the Grave Domain Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Grave Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
3	Detect Evil and Good, False Life, Gentle Repose, Ray of Enfeeblement, Spare the Dying
5	Revivify, Vampiric Touch
7	Blight, Death Ward
9	Dispel Evil and Good, Raise Dead

Level 3: Circle of Mortality RHW

You can manipulate the balance between life and death, granting you the following benefits.

Pull of Death. Once per turn, when you deal damage to a creature that's missing any Hit Points by casting a spell or by hitting with an attack roll, that creature takes an extra 1d4 Necrotic damage. This extra damage increases to 1d6 when you reach Cleric level 11.

Return to Life. You can cast Spare the Dying as a Bonus Action.

Additionally, when you would normally roll one or more dice to restore Hit Points to a creature at 0 Hit Points with a spell or Channel Divinity, don't roll those dice for the healing; instead, use the highest number possible for each die. For example, instead of restoring 2d4 Hit Points to a creature at 0 Hit Points with a spell, you restore 8.

Level 3: Path to the Grave RHW

As a Bonus Action, you present your Holy Symbol and expend a use of Channel Divinity to curse one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself until the start of your next turn. While cursed, the creature has Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws.

When you or an ally you can see hits the cursed target with an attack roll, you can end the curse early (no action required) to make the attack deal extra Necrotic or Radiant damage (your choice) equal to your Cleric level.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p71

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Cleric levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Sear Undead PHB'24 p71

Whenever you use Turn Undead, you can roll a number of d8s equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1d8) and add the rolls together. Each Undead that fails its saving throw against that use of Turn Undead takes Radiant damage equal to the roll's total. This damage doesn't end the turn effect.

Level 6: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p71

You gain a feature from your Cleric Subclass.

Level 6: Sentinel at Death's Door RHW

When you or a Bloodied creature you can see within 60 feet of yourself is hit with an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to halve that attack's damage (round down). If the triggering attack roll was a Critical Hit, any effects triggered by a Critical Hit are canceled.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 7: Blessed Strikes PHB'24 p71

Divine power infuses you in battle. You gain one of the following options of your choice (if you get either option from a Cleric subclass in an older book, use only the option you choose for this feature).

Divine Strike. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with an attack roll using a weapon, you can cause the target to take an extra 1d8 Necrotic or Radiant damage (your choice).

Potent Spellcasting. Add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any Cleric cantrip.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p71

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 10: Divine Intervention PHB'24 p71

You can call on your deity or pantheon to intervene on your behalf. As a Magic action, choose any Cleric spell of level 5 or lower that doesn't require a Reaction to cast. As part of the same action, you cast that spell without expending a spell slot or needing Material components. You can't use this feature again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p71

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 14: Improved Blessed Strikes PHB'24 p71

The option you chose for Blessed Strikes grows more powerful.

Divine Strike. The extra damage of your Divine Strike increases to 2d8.

Potent Spellcasting. When you cast a Cleric cantrip and deal damage to a creature with it, you can give vitality to yourself or another creature within 60 feet of yourself, granting a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to twice your Wisdom modifier.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p71

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 17: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p71

You gain a feature from your Cleric Subclass.

Level 17: Divine Reaper RHW

Your deep connection to this domain renders you a hallowed harbinger of death, granting you the following benefits.

Enhanced Necromancy. When you cast a spell of level 5 or lower from the Necromancy school that targets one creature, or when you cast a spell from the Grave Domain Spells table, you can expend a use of Channel Divinity to target a second creature within the spell's range. If the spell requires costly or consumed Material components, you must provide Material components for each target.

Keeper of Souls. When an enemy dies within 60 feet of you, you or one creature you can see within 60 feet of yourself regains Hit Points equal to twice your Cleric level. You can't use this feature if you have the Incapacitated condition. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest, unless you expend a level 6+ spell slot (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Level 19: Epic Boon PHB'24 p71

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Fate is recommended.

Level 20: Greater Divine Intervention PHB'24 p71

You can call on even more powerful divine intervention. When you use your Divine Intervention feature, you can choose Wish when you select a spell. If you do so, you can't use Divine Intervention again until you finish 2d4 Long Rests.

Ranger

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Favored Enemy	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots per Spell Level				
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1st	+2	Spellcasting, Favored Enemy, Weapon Mastery	2	2	2	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Deft Explorer, Fighting Style	2	3	2	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Ranger Subclass	2	4	3	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	2	5	3	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Extra Attack	3	6	4	2	—	—	—
6th	+3	Roving	3	6	4	2	—	—	—
7th	+3	Subclass Feature	3	7	4	3	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	3	7	4	3	—	—	—
9th	+4	Expertise	4	9	4	3	2	—	—
10th	+4	Tireless	4	9	4	3	2	—	—
11th	+4	Subclass Feature	4	10	4	3	3	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	4	10	4	3	3	—	—
13th	+5	Relentless Hunter	5	11	4	3	3	1	—
14th	+5	Nature's Veil	5	11	4	3	3	1	—
15th	+5	Subclass Feature	5	12	4	3	3	2	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	5	12	4	3	3	2	—
17th	+6	Precise Hunter	6	14	4	3	3	3	1
18th	+6	Feral Senses	6	14	4	3	3	3	1
19th	+6	Epic Boon	6	15	4	3	3	3	2
20th	+6	Foe Slayer	6	15	4	3	3	3	2

Features | Variants | Info

Beast Master (PHB'14) | Beast Master (PHB'24) | Drakewarden (FTD) | Fey Wanderer (TCE) | Fey Wanderer (PHB'24) | Gloom Stalker (XGE) | Gloom Stalker (PHB'24) | Hollow Warden (RHW) | Horizon Walker (XGE) | Hunter (PHB'14) | Hunter (PHB'24) | Monster Slayer (XGE) | Swarmkeeper (TCE) | Winter Walker (FRHoF)

Filter...

Ranger [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Dexterity and Wisdom

Hit Point Die: D10 per Ranger level
Hit Points at Level 1: 10 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Ranger Level: D10 + your Con. modifier, or, 6 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Strength, Dexterity

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 3:* Animal Handling, Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple and Martial weapons

Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Studded Leather Armor, Scimitar, Shortsword, Longbow, 20 Arrows, Quiver, Druidic Focus (sprig of mistletoe), Explorer's Pack, and 7 GP; or (B) 150 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 1:* Animal Handling, Athletics, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Weapon Proficiencies: Martial weapons

Armor Training: Light and Medium armor and Shields

Source: *PHB'24*, page 118. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Spellcasting

PHB'24 p119

You have learned to channel the magical essence of nature to cast spells. See chapter 7 for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Ranger spells, which appear in the Ranger spell list later in the class's description.

Spell Slots. The Ranger Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your level 1+ spells. You regain all expended slots when you finish a Long Rest.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose two level 1 Ranger spells. Cure Wounds and Ensnaring Strike are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Ranger levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Ranger Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional Ranger spells until the number of spells on your list matches the number in the Ranger Features table. The chosen spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For example, if you're a level 5 Ranger, your list of prepared spells can include six Ranger spells of level 1 or 2 in any combination.

If another Ranger feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those spells don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Ranger spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can replace one spell on your list with another Ranger spell for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for your Ranger spells.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use a Druidic Focus as a Spellcasting Focus for your Ranger spells.

Level 1: Favored Enemy

PHB'24 p120

You always have the Hunter's Mark spell prepared. You can cast it twice without expending a spell slot, and you regain all expended uses of this ability when you finish a Long Rest.

The number of times you can cast the spell without a spell slot increases when you reach certain Ranger levels, as shown in the Favored Enemy column of the Ranger Features table.

Level 1: Weapon Mastery

PHB'24 p120

Your training with weapons allows you to use the mastery properties of two kinds of weapons of your choice with which you have proficiency, such as Longbows and Shortswords.

Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change the kinds of weapons you chose. For example, you could switch to using the mastery properties of Scimitars and Longswords.

Level 2: Deft Explorer

PHB'24 p120

Thanks to your travels, you gain the following benefits.

Expertise. Choose one of your skill proficiencies with which you lack Expertise. You gain Expertise in that skill.

Languages. You know two languages of your choice from the language tables in chapter 2.

Level 2: Fighting Style PHB'24 p120

You gain a Fighting Style feat of your choice. Instead of choosing one of those feats, you can choose the option below.

Druidic Warrior. You learn two Druid cantrips of your choice. Guidance and Starry Wisp are recommended. The chosen cantrips count as Ranger spells for you, and Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for them. Whenever you gain a Ranger level, you can replace one of these cantrips with another Druid cantrip.

Level 3: Ranger Subclass PHB'24 p120

You gain a Ranger subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Ranger levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Ranger level or lower.

Hollow Warden RHW

Draw on the Might of Ancient Wild Terrors

Legends tell that the most ancient and bloodthirsty terrors lurk deep within the old places of the earth. Hollow Wardens venerate and draw power from such beings, transforming themselves into merciless and monstrous guardians that stalk jagged coastlines, steep mountain crags, and other dark and wild places.

Level 3: Hollow Warden Spells RHW

When you reach a Ranger level specified in the Hollow Warden Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spell prepared.

Hollow Warden Spells

Ranger Level	Spell
3	Wrathful Smite
5	Alter Self
9	Phantom Steed
13	Dominate Beast
17	Steel Wind Strike

Level 3: Wrath of the Wild RHW

You draw power from the strange and ancient horrors of the land, causing you to sprout unnatural growths, such as bloody antlers or putrid fangs, or causing your shadow to lengthen or twist around you. As a Bonus Action, you can expend a use of Favored Enemy to transform into a ghastly form, gaining the following benefits for 1 minute or until you have the Incapacitated condition, die, or end the transformation (no action required).

Ancient Armor. You gain a +1 bonus to AC, as your body is wreathed in rotten bark and beastly bristles. This bonus increases to +2 when you reach Ranger level 11.

Prowling Retribution. Immediately after a creature you can see within 5 feet of yourself deals damage to you or one of your allies, you can make an Opportunity Attack against that creature.

Unnerving Aura. When you transform and at the start of each of your subsequent turns, each creature of your choice in a 10-foot Emanation originating from you makes a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, a creature has the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p120

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Ranger levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Extra Attack PHB'24 p120

You can attack twice instead of once whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Level 6: Roving PHB'24 p121

Your Speed increases by 10 feet while you aren't wearing Heavy armor. You also have a Climb Speed and a Swim Speed equal to your Speed.

Level 7: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p121

You gain a feature from your Ranger Subclass.

Level 7: Hungering Might RHW

You gain a bonus to Constitution saving throws equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of +1).

In addition, once per turn when you hit a creature with an attack roll while you are transformed using Wrath of the Wild, you regain a number of Hit Points equal to 1d10 plus your Wisdom modifier, provided you are Bloodied when you hit.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p121

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 9: Expertise PHB'24 p121

Choose two of your skill proficiencies with which you lack Expertise. You gain Expertise in those skills.

Level 10: Tireless PHB'24 p121

Primal forces now help fuel you on your journeys, granting you the following benefits.

Temporary Hit Points. As a Magic action, you can give yourself a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to 1d8 plus your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1). You can use this action a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Decrease Exhaustion. Whenever you finish a Short Rest, your Exhaustion level, if any, decreases by 1.

Level 11: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p121

You gain a feature from your Ranger Subclass.

Level 11: Rot and Violence RHW

Your dedication to wild eldritch beings alters you further. When transformed using Wrath of the Wild, you gain the following additional benefits.

Menacing Aura. When a creature fails its saving throw against your Unnerving Aura, it also can't regain Hit Points or take Reactions until the start of your next turn.

Strangling Roots. When you hit a creature with an attack roll using a weapon, you can activate the Sap or Slow mastery property in addition to a different mastery property you're using with that weapon.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p121

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 13: Relentless Hunter PHB'24 p121

Taking damage can't break your Concentration on Hunter's Mark.

Level 14: Nature's Veil PHB'24 p121

You invoke spirits of nature to magically hide yourself. As a Bonus Action, you can give yourself the Invisible condition until the end of your next turn.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 15: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p121

You gain a feature from your Ranger Subclass.

Level 15: Ancient Might RHW

You become wholly suffused with the wild's ancient and terrible power, granting you the following benefits.

Ominous Strikes. When you hit a creature that has the Frightened condition with an attack roll, that attack deals extra damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Persistent Wrath. If you're reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright while transformed using Wrath of the Wild, you can surge with wild power. Your Hit Points instead change to a number equal to twice your Ranger level. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest. You can also expend a level 4+ spell slot (no action required) to restore your use of this feature.

Timeless. You have Immunity to the Exhaustion condition.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p121

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 17: Precise Hunter PHB'24 p121

You have Advantage on attack rolls against the creature currently marked by your Hunter's Mark.

Level 18: Feral Senses PHB'24 p121

Your connection to the forces of nature grants you Blindsight with a range of 30 feet.

Level 19: Epic Boon PHB'24 p121

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Dimensional Travel is recommended.

Level 20: Foe Slayer PHB'24 p121

The damage die of your Hunter's Mark is a d10 rather than a d6.

Rogue

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Sneak Attack
1st	+2	Expertise, Sneak Attack, Thieves' Cant, Weapon Mastery	1d6
2nd	+2	Cunning Action	1d6
3rd	+2	Rogue Subclass, Steady Aim	2d6
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	2d6
5th	+3	Cunning Strike, Uncanny Dodge	3d6
6th	+3	Expertise	3d6
7th	+3	Evasion, Reliable Talent	4d6
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	4d6
9th	+4	Subclass Feature	5d6
10th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	5d6
11th	+4	Improved Cunning Strike	6d6
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	6d6
13th	+5	Subclass Feature	7d6
14th	+5	Devious Strikes	7d6
15th	+5	Slippery Mind	8d6
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	8d6
17th	+6	Subclass Feature	9d6
18th	+6	Elusive	9d6
19th	+6	Epic Boon	10d6
20th	+6	Stroke of Luck	10d6

Features | Variants | Info

Arcane Trickster (PHB'14) | Arcane Trickster (PHB'24) | Assassin (PHB'14) | Assassin (PHB'24) | Inquisitive (XGE) | Mastermind (XGE) | Phantom (TCE) | Phantom (RHW) | Scion of the Three (FRHoF) | Scout (XGE) | Soulknife (TCE) | Soulknife (PHB'24) | Swashbuckler (XGE) | Thief (PHB'14) | Thief (PHB'24)

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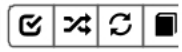


Rogue [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Dexterity

Hit Point Die: D8 per Rogue level
Hit Points at Level 1: 8 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Rogue Level: D8 + your Con. modifier, or, 5 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Dexterity, Intelligence

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 4:* Acrobatics, Athletics, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons and Martial weapons that have the Finesse or Light property

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' Tools

Armor Training: Light armor

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Leather Armor, 2 Daggers, Shortsword, Shortbow, 20 Arrows, Quiver, Thieves' Tools, Burglar's Pack, and 8 GP; or (B) 100 GP

Level 1: Expertise

PHB'24 p128

You gain Expertise in two of your skill proficiencies of your choice. Sleight of Hand and Stealth are recommended if you have proficiency in them.

At Rogue level 6, you gain Expertise in two more of your skill proficiencies of your choice.

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 1:* Acrobatics, Athletics, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth.

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' Tools

Armor Training: Light armor

Source: *PHB'24*, page 128. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Sneak Attack

PHB'24 p128

You know how to strike subtly and exploit a foe's distraction. Once per turn, you can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature you hit with an attack roll if you have Advantage on the roll and the attack uses a Finesse or a Ranged weapon. The extra damage's type is the same as the weapon's type.

You don't need Advantage on the attack roll if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the target, the ally doesn't have the Incapacitated condition, and you don't have Disadvantage on the attack roll.

The extra damage increases as you gain Rogue levels, as shown in the Sneak Attack column of the Rogue Features table.

Level 1: Thieves' Cant

PHB'24 p128

You picked up various languages in the communities where you plied your roguish talents. You know Thieves' Cant and one other language of your choice, which you choose from the language tables in chapter 2.

Level 1: Weapon Mastery

PHB'24 p128

Your training with weapons allows you to use the mastery properties of two kinds of weapons of your choice with which you have proficiency, such as Daggers and Shortbows.

Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change the kinds of weapons you chose. For example, you could switch to using the mastery properties of Scimitars and Shortswords.

Level 2: Cunning Action

PHB'24 p129

Your quick thinking and agility allow you to move and act quickly. On your turn, you can take one of the following actions as a Bonus Action: Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

Level 3: Rogue Subclass

PHB'24 p129

You gain a Rogue subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Rogue levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Rogue level or lower.

Phantom

RHW

Embrace Death and Wield Ghostly Power

Some Rogues traverse the veil between life and death, shepherding opponents to the grave and slipping through the world as undetectable as a spirit. In these pursuits, a Rogue might discover a mystical connection to death itself. Such an individual becomes immersed in negative energy, infusing their strikes with deathly energy and stealing knowledge from souls who have passed on. Thieves' guilds value Rogues of this persuasion as highly effective information gatherers and spies.

Level 3: Wails from the Grave

RHW

Immediately after you deal Sneak Attack damage to a creature on your turn, you can target a second creature that you can see within 30 feet of the first creature. Roll half the number of Sneak Attack damage dice for your level (round up), and the second creature takes Necrotic damage equal to the roll's total as wails of the dead sound around it.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Dexterity modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 3: Whispers of the Dead

RHW

Whenever you finish a Short or Long Rest, you can choose one skill or tool proficiency that you lack and gain it, as a ghostly presence shares its knowledge with you. You lose this proficiency when you use this benefit again to choose a different proficiency.

Level 3: Steady Aim

PHB'24 p129

As a Bonus Action, you give yourself Advantage on your next attack roll on the current turn. You can use this feature only if you haven't moved during this turn, and after you use it, your Speed is 0 until the end of the current turn.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement

PHB'24 p129

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Rogue levels 8, 10, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Cunning Strike

PHB'24 p129

You've developed cunning ways to use your Sneak Attack. When you deal Sneak Attack damage, you can add one of the following Cunning Strike effects. Each effect has a die cost, which is the number of Sneak Attack damage dice you must forgo to add the effect. You remove the die before rolling, and the effect occurs immediately after the attack's damage is dealt. For example, if you add the Poison effect, remove 1d6 from the Sneak Attack's damage before rolling.

If a Cunning Strike effect requires a saving throw, the DC equals 8 plus your Dexterity modifier and Proficiency Bonus.

Poison (Cost: 1d6). You add a toxin to your strike, forcing the target to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the Poisoned target repeats the save, ending the effect on itself on a success.

To use this effect, you must have a Poisoner's Kit on your person.

Trip (Cost: 1d6). If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or have the Prone condition.

Withdraw (Cost: 1d6). Immediately after the attack, you move up to half your Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Level 5: Uncanny Dodge

PHB'24 p129

When an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to halve the attack's damage against you (round down).

Level 6: Expertise

PHB'24 p129

You gain Expertise in two of your Skill Proficiencies of your choice.

Level 7: Evasion

PHB'24 p129

You can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain dangers. When you're subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw and only half damage if you fail. You can't use this feature if you have the Incapacitated condition.

Level 7: Reliable Talent

PHB'24 p130

Whenever you make an ability check that uses one of your skill or tool proficiencies, you can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement

PHB'24 p130

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 9: Subclass Feature

PHB'24 p130

You gain a feature from your Rogue Subclass.

Level 9: Tokens of the Departed RHW

The spirits of the dead are drawn to you, and echoes of their past lives magically manifest as strange curios with resonant power.

You gain two soul trinkets. A soul trinket is a Tiny object (the DM determines the trinket's form or has you roll on the Trinkets table in the Player's Handbook to generate it). If you move more than 30 feet from a trinket, the trinket immediately teleports to you, appearing somewhere on your person.

Using Soul Trinkets. You can use soul trinkets in the following ways:

Death's Knell. When you deal Sneak Attack damage on your turn, you can destroy one soul trinket and immediately use Wails from the Grave without expending a use of that feature.

Life Essence. While you have at least one soul trinket, you have Advantage on Death Saving Throws and Constitution saving throws.

Spirit Query. You can take a Magic action to destroy one soul trinket and immediately cast the Augury spell, requiring no spell components and using Constitution as the spellcasting modifier. If you know the creature with which the trinket is associated, you can ask the creature's spirit one question instead of casting the spell. In this case, the spirit appears to you and answers as concisely as possible in a language it knew in life.

Gaining Additional Soul Trinkets. When a creature you can see within 30 feet of you dies, you can take a Reaction to gain another soul trinket, claiming a sliver of that creature's departing spirit. The new trinket appears somewhere on your person.

You can have a maximum of two soul trinkets at a time. If you try to gain a soul trinket while at your maximum, one of your existing trinkets is immediately destroyed and replaced by the new trinket. The maximum number of soul trinkets you can have increases when you reach Rogue levels 13 (three trinkets) and 17 (four trinkets).

Whenever you finish a Long Rest with fewer than two soul trinkets, you gain soul trinkets until you have two.

Level 9: Voice of Death RHW

You can cast Speak with Dead once without a spell slot, requiring no spell components and using Dexterity as the spellcasting modifier. You regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a Short or Long Rest.

When you cast the spell, you can target one of your soul trinkets from Tokens of the Departed instead of a corpse, allowing the spirit of the creature associated with the trinket to answer.

Level 10: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p130

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 11: Improved Cunning Strike PHB'24 p130

You can use up to two Cunning Strike effects when you deal Sneak Attack damage, paying the die cost for each effect.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p131

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 13: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p131

You gain a feature from your Rogue Subclass.

Level 13: Ghost Walk RHW

As a Bonus Action, you assume a spectral form, gaining the benefits below for 10 minutes or until you end them (no action required). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you destroy one of your soul trinkets from Tokens of the Departed (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Flight. You gain a Fly Speed of 10 feet and can hover.

Hazy Form. Attack rolls have Disadvantage against you.

Incorporeal Movement. You can move through creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain, but you take 1d10 Force damage if you end your turn inside a creature or an object.

Level 14: Devious Strikes PHB'24 p131

You've practiced new ways to use your Sneak Attack deviously. The following effects are now among your Cunning Strike options.

Daze (Cost: 2d6). The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or on its next turn, it can do only one of the following: move or take an action or a Bonus Action.

Knock Out (Cost: 6d6). The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or it has the Unconscious condition for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. The Unconscious target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Obscure (Cost: 3d6). The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw, or it has the Blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

Level 15: Slippery Mind PHB'24 p131

Your cunning mind is exceptionally difficult to control. You gain proficiency in Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p131

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 17: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p131

You gain a feature from your Rogue Subclass.

Level 17: Death's Friend RHW

Your association with death has become so close that you gain the following benefits.

Death's Lament. When you use Wails from the Grave, you can deal the feature's Necrotic damage to both the first and the second creature.

Draw of Death. When you roll Initiative, you gain one soul trinket for your Tokens of the Departed if you have none remaining.

Level 18: Elusive PHB'24 p131

You're so evasive that attackers rarely gain the upper hand against you. No attack roll can have Advantage against you unless you have the Incapacitated condition.

Level 19: Epic Boon PHB'24 p131

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of the Night Spirit is recommended.

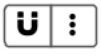
Level 20: Stroke of Luck PHB'24 p131

You have a marvelous knack for succeeding when you need to. If you fail a D20 Test, you can turn the roll into a 20.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

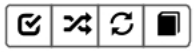
Sorcerer

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Sorcery Points	Cantrips	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots per Spell Level							
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+2	Spellcasting, Innate Sorcery	—	4	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Font of Magic, Metamagic, Metamagic Options	2	4	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Sorcerer Subclass	3	4	6	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	4	5	7	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	Sorcerous Restoration	5	5	9	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+3	Subclass Feature	6	5	10	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+3	Sorcery Incarnate	7	5	11	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	8	5	12	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+4	—	9	5	14	4	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+4	Metamagic	10	6	15	4	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+4	—	11	6	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	12	6	16	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	+5	—	13	6	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
14th	+5	Subclass Feature	14	6	17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
15th	+5	—	15	6	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	16	6	18	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
17th	+6	Metamagic	17	6	19	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	Subclass Feature	18	6	20	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	Epic Boon	19	6	21	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Arcane Apotheosis	20	6	22	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1



Features | Variants | Info

Aberrant (PHB'24) | Filter...



Aberrant Mind (TCE)
Clockwork (PHB'24)
Clockwork Soul (TCE)
Divine Soul (XGE)
Draconic (PHB'14)
Draconic (PHB'24)
Lunar (DSotDQ)
Shadow (XGE)
Shadow (RHW)
Spellfire (FRHoF)
Storm (XGE)
Wild (PHB'14)
Wild Magic (PHB'24)

(1 more not shown)

Sorcerer [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Charisma

Hit Point Die: D6 per Sorcerer level
Hit Points at Level 1: 6 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Sorcerer Level: D6 + your Con. modifier, or, 4 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Constitution, Charisma

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 2:* Arcana, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion, or Religion.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Spear, 2 Daggers, Arcane Focus (crystal), Dungeoneer's Pack, and 28 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.

Source: *PHB'24*, page 138. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Spellcasting

Drawing from your innate magic, you can cast spells. See chapter 7 for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Sorcerer spells, which appear in the Sorcerer spell list later in the class's description.

Cantrips. You know four Sorcerer cantrips of your choice. Light, Prestidigitation, Shocking Grasp, and Sorcerous Burst are recommended. Whenever you gain a Sorcerer level, you can replace one of your cantrips from this feature with another Sorcerer cantrip of your choice.

When you reach Sorcerer levels 4 and 10, you learn another Sorcerer cantrip of your choice, as shown in the Cantrips column of the Sorcerer Features table.

Spell Slots. The Sorcerer Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your level 1+ spells. You regain all expended slots when you finish a Long Rest.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose two level 1 Sorcerer spells. Burning Hands and Detect Magic are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Sorcerer levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Sorcerer Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional Sorcerer spells until the number of spells on your list matches the number in the Sorcerer Features table. The chosen spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For example, if you're a level 3 Sorcerer, your list of prepared spells can include six Sorcerer spells of level 1 or 2 in any combination.

If another Sorcerer feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those spells don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Sorcerer spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you gain a Sorcerer level, you can replace one spell on your list with another Sorcerer spell for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your Sorcerer spells.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use an Arcane Focus as a Spellcasting Focus for your Sorcerer spells.

Level 1: Innate Sorcery

An event in your past left an indelible mark on you, infusing you with simmering magic. As a Bonus Action, you can unleash that magic for 1 minute, during which you gain the following benefits:

- The spell save DC of your Sorcerer spells increases by 1.
- You have Advantage on the attack rolls of Sorcerer spells you cast.

You can use this feature twice, and you regain all expended uses of it when you finish a Long Rest.

Level 2: Font of Magic

You can tap into the wellspring of magic within yourself. This wellspring is represented by Sorcery Points, which allow you to create a variety of magical effects.

You have 2 Sorcery Points, and you gain more as you reach higher levels, as shown in the Sorcery Points column of the Sorcerer Features table. You can't have more Sorcery Points than the number shown in the table for your level. You regain all expended Sorcery Points when you finish a Long Rest.

You can use your Sorcery Points to fuel the options below, along with other features, such as Metamagic, that use those points.

Converting Spell Slots to Sorcery Points. You can expend a spell slot to gain a number of Sorcery Points equal to the slot's level (no action required).

Creating Spell Slots. As a Bonus Action, you can transform unexpended Sorcery Points into one spell slot. The Creating Spell Slots table shows the cost of creating a spell slot of a given level, and it lists the minimum Sorcerer level you must be to create a slot. You can create a spell slot no higher than level 5.

Any spell slot you create with this feature vanishes when you finish a Long Rest.

Creating Spell Slots

Spell Slot Level	Sorcery Point Cost	Min. Sorcerer Level
1	2	2
2	3	3
3	5	5
4	6	7
5	7	9

Level 2: Metamagic

Because your magic flows from within, you can alter your spells to suit your needs; you gain two Metamagic options of your choice from "Metamagic Options" later in this class's description. You use the chosen options to temporarily modify spells you cast. To use an option, you must spend the number of Sorcery Points that it costs.

You can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it unless otherwise noted in one of those options.

Whenever you gain a Sorcerer level, you can replace one of your Metamagic options with one you don't know. You gain two more options at Sorcerer level 10 and two more at Sorcerer level 17.

Level 2: Metamagic Options PHB'24 p141

The following options are available to your Metamagic feature. The options are presented in alphabetical order.

Careful Spell PHB'24 p141

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, you can protect some of those creatures from the spell's full force. To do so, spend 1 Sorcery Point and choose a number of those creatures up to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one creature). A chosen creature automatically succeeds on its saving throw against the spell, and it takes no damage if it would normally take half damage on a successful save.

Distant Spell PHB'24 p141

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell that has a range of at least 5 feet, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to double the spell's range. Or when you cast a spell that has a range of Touch, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to make the spell's range 30 feet.

Empowered Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you roll damage for a spell, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to reroll a number of the damage dice up to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one), and you must use the new rolls.

You can use Empowered Spell even if you've already used a different Metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Extended Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell that has a duration of 1 minute or longer, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to double its duration to a maximum duration of 24 hours.

If the affected spell requires Concentration, you have Advantage on any saving throw you make to maintain that Concentration.

Heightened Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 2 Sorcery Points

When you cast a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw, you can spend 2 Sorcery Points to give one target of the spell Disadvantage on saves against the spell.

Quickened Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 2 Sorcery Points

When you cast a spell that has a casting time of an action, you can spend 2 Sorcery Points to change the casting time to a Bonus Action for this casting. You can't modify a spell in this way if you've already cast a level 1+ spell on the current turn, nor can you cast a level 1+ spell on this turn after modifying a spell in this way.

Seeking Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

If you make an attack roll for a spell and miss, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to reroll the d20, and you must use the new roll.

You can use Seeking Spell even if you've already used a different Metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Subtle Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to cast it without any Verbal, Somatic, or Material components, except Material components that are consumed by the spell or that have a cost specified in the spell.

Transmuted Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell that deals a type of damage from the following list, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to change that damage type to one of the other listed types: Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Poison, Thunder.

Twinned Spell PHB'24 p142

Cost: 1 Sorcery Point

When you cast a spell, such as Charm Person, that can be cast with a higher-level spell slot to target an additional creature, you can spend 1 Sorcery Point to increase the spell's effective level by 1.

Level 3: Sorcerer Subclass PHB'24 p141

You gain a Sorcerer subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Sorcerer levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Sorcerer level or lower.

Shadow Sorcery RHW

Bend Doom and Darkness to Your Will

Your innate magic comes from the most nebulous and inscrutable forces of the Shadowfell or from other regions of supernatural darkness. You might trace your lineage to an entity from such a place, or perhaps you were exposed to the sinister energy of a shadow dragon and were transformed by it. Your shadowy magic allows you to command darkness, undeath, and woe.

Level 3: Shadow Spells RHW

When you reach a Sorcerer level specified in the Shadow Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Shadow Spells

Sorcerer Level	Spells
3	Bane, Darkness, Inflict Wounds, Pass Without Trace
5	Hunger of Hadar, Nondetection
7	Greater Invisibility, Phantasmal Killer
9	Contagion, Creation

Level 3: Power of Shadow RHW

You gain the following benefits.

Eyes of the Dark. You have Darkvision with a range of 120 feet and Blindsight with a range of 10 feet. In addition, if a spell you cast creates an area of Darkness, you can see normally through that spell's Darkness.

Strength of the Grave. If you would drop to 0 Hit Points and not die outright, you can make a Charisma saving throw (DC 5 plus the damage taken). On a successful save, your Hit Points instead change to a number equal to your Charisma modifier plus your Sorcerer level. After you succeed on this save, you can't use this benefit again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p141

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Sorcerer levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 5: Sorcerous Restoration PHB'24 p141

When you finish a Short Rest, you can regain expended Sorcery Points, but no more than a number equal to half your Sorcerer level (round down). Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 6: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p141

You gain a feature from your Sorcerer subclass.

Level 6: Beasts of Ill Omen RHW

You can call forth a howling creature of shadow to hound your foes. You can spend 3 Sorcery Points to cast Summon Beast as a Bonus Action without expending a spell slot, without preparing the spell, and without Material components. The summoned creature appears as a beast made of shadow, and enemies within 5 feet of the summoned creature have Disadvantage on saving throws against spells you cast.

Whenever you cast the spell, you can modify it so that it doesn't require Concentration. If you do so, the spell's duration becomes 1 minute for that casting, and the spell ends early if you cast the spell again.

Level 7: Sorcery Incarnate PHB'24 p141

If you have no uses of Innate Sorcery left, you can use it if you spend 2 Sorcery Points when you take the Bonus Action to activate it.

In addition, while your Innate Sorcery feature is active, you can use up to two of your Metamagic options on each spell you cast.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p141

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 10: Metamagic PHB'24 p141

Because your magic flows from within you, you can alter your spells to suit your needs; you gain two Metamagic options of your choice from the "Metamagic Options" section later in this class's description.

You can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it, unless otherwise noted in one of those options.

Whenever you gain a Sorcerer level, you can replace one of your Metamagic options with one you don't know.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p141

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 14: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p141

You gain a feature from your Sorcerer subclass.

Level 14: Shadow Walk RHW

While you are in Dim Light or Darkness, you can take a Bonus Action to teleport up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space you can see that is also in Dim Light or Darkness.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p141

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 17: Metamagic

PHB'24 p141

Because your magic flows from within you, you can alter your spells to suit your needs; you gain two Metamagic options of your choice from the "Metamagic Options" section later in this class's description.

You can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it, unless otherwise noted in one of those options.

Whenever you gain a Sorcerer level, you can replace one of your Metamagic options with one you don't know.

Level 18: Subclass Feature

PHB'24 p141

You gain a feature from your Sorcerer subclass.

Level 18: Umbral Form

RHW

When you use Innate Sorcery, you can adopt a shadowy form, gaining the benefits below while your Innate Sorcery is active or until you end the form (no action required). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you spend 6 Sorcery Points (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Incorporeal Movement. You can move through creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain, but you take 1d10 Force damage if you end your turn inside a creature or an object.

Shadow Resilience. You have Resistance to all damage except Force and Radiant damage.

Level 19: Epic Boon

PHB'24 p141

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Dimensional Travel is recommended.

Level 20: Arcane Apotheosis

PHB'24 p141

While your Innate Sorcery feature is active, you can use one Metamagic option on each of your turns without spending Sorcery Points on it.

Warlock

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Invocations	Cantrips	Prepared Spells	Spell Slots	Slot Level
1st	+2	Eldritch Invocations, Pact Magic, Eldritch Invocation Options	1	2	2	1	1
2nd	+2	Magical Cunning	3	2	3	2	1
3rd	+2	Warlock Subclass	3	2	4	2	2
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3	3	5	2	2
5th	+3	—	5	3	6	2	3
6th	+3	Subclass Feature	5	3	7	2	3
7th	+3	—	6	3	8	2	4
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	6	3	9	2	4
9th	+4	Contact Patron	7	3	10	2	5
10th	+4	Subclass Feature	7	4	10	2	5
11th	+4	Mystic Arcanum	7	4	11	3	5
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	8	4	11	3	5
13th	+5	Mystic Arcanum	8	4	12	3	5
14th	+5	Subclass Feature	8	4	12	3	5
15th	+5	Mystic Arcanum	9	4	13	3	5
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	9	4	13	3	5
17th	+6	Mystic Arcanum	9	4	14	4	5
18th	+6	—	10	4	14	4	5
19th	+6	Epic Boon	10	4	15	4	5
20th	+6	Eldritch Master	10	4	15	4	5

Features | Variants | Info

Archfey (PHB'24)
Archfey (PHB'14)
Celestial (PHB'24)
Celestial (XGE)
Fathomless (TCE)
Fiend (PHB'24)
Fiend (PHB'14)
Genie (TCE)
Great Old One (PHB'24)
Great Old One (PHB'14)
Hexblade (XGE)
Undead (VRGR)
Undead (RHW)
Undying (SCAG)

Filter...

Warlock [−]

Core Traits

Primary Ability: Charisma

Hit Point Die: D8 per Warlock level
Hit Points at Level 1: 8 + Con. modifier
Hit Points per additional Warlock Level: D8 + your Con. modifier, or, 5 + your Con. modifier

Saving Throw Proficiencies: Wisdom, Charisma

Skill Proficiencies: *Choose 2:* Arcana, Deception, History, Intimidation, Investigation, Nature, or Religion.

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple weapons

Armor Training: Light armor

Starting Equipment: *Choose A or B:* (A) Leather Armor, Sickle, 2 Daggers, Arcane Focus (orb), Book (occult lore), Scholar's Pack, and 15 GP; or (B) 100 GP

Multiclassing

To qualify for a new class, you must have a score of at least 13 in the primary ability of the new class and your current classes.
Armor Training: Light armor

Source: *PHB'24*, page 152. Available in the SRD 5.2.1 and the Basic Rules (5.5e/2024).

Level 1: Eldritch Invocations

You have unearthed Eldritch Invocations, pieces of forbidden knowledge that imbue you with an abiding magical ability or other lessons. You gain one invocation of your choice, such as Pact of the Tome. Invocations are described in the "Eldritch Invocation Options" section later in this class's description.

Prerequisites. If an invocation has a prerequisite, you must meet it to learn that invocation. For example, if an invocation requires you to be a level 5+ Warlock, you can select the invocation once you reach Warlock level 5.

Replacing and Gaining Invocations. Whenever you gain a Warlock level, you can replace one of your invocations with another one for which you qualify. You can't replace an invocation if it's a prerequisite for another invocation that you have.

When you gain certain Warlock levels, you gain more invocations of your choice, as shown in the Invocations column of the Warlock Features table.

You can't pick the same invocation more than once unless its description says otherwise.

Level 1: Pact Magic

Through occult ceremony, you have formed a pact with a mysterious entity to gain magical powers. The entity is a voice in the shadows—its identity unclear—but its boon to you is concrete: the ability to cast spells. See chapter 7 for the rules on spellcasting. The information below details how you use those rules with Warlock spells, which appear in the Warlock spell list later in the class's description.

Cantrips. You know two Warlock cantrips of your choice. Eldritch Blast and Prestidigitation are recommended. Whenever you gain a Warlock level, you can replace one of your cantrips from this feature with another Warlock cantrip of your choice.

When you reach Warlock levels 4 and 10, you learn another Warlock cantrip of your choice, as shown in the Cantrips column of the Warlock Features table.

Spell Slots. The Warlock Features table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your Warlock spells of levels 1–5. The table also shows the level of those slots, all of which are the same level. You regain all expended Pact Magic spell slots when you finish a Short or Long Rest.

For example, when you're a level 5 Warlock, you have two level 3 spell slots. To cast the level 1 spell Witch Bolt, you must spend one of those slots, and you cast it as a level 3 spell.

Prepared Spells of Level 1+. You prepare the list of level 1+ spells that are available for you to cast with this feature. To start, choose two level 1 Warlock spells. Charm Person and Hex are recommended.

The number of spells on your list increases as you gain Warlock levels, as shown in the Prepared Spells column of the Warlock Features table. Whenever that number increases, choose additional Warlock spells until the number of spells on your list matches the number in the table. The chosen spells must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the table's Slot Level column for your level. When you reach level 6, for example, you learn a new Warlock spell, which can be of levels 1–3.

If another Warlock feature gives you spells that you always have prepared, those spells don't count against the number of spells you can prepare with this feature, but those spells otherwise count as Warlock spells for you.

Changing Your Prepared Spells. Whenever you gain a Warlock level, you can replace one spell on your list with another Warlock spell of an eligible level.

Spellcasting Ability. Charisma is the spellcasting ability for your Warlock spells.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use an Arcane Focus as a Spellcasting Focus for your Warlock spells.

Level 1: Eldritch Invocation Options PHB'24 p153

Eldritch Invocation options appear in alphabetical order.

Agonizing Blast PHB'24 p155

Prerequisites: Level 2+ Warlock, a Warlock Cantrip That Deals Damage

Choose one of your known Warlock cantrips that deals damage. You can add your Charisma modifier to that spell's damage rolls.

Repeatable. You can gain this invocation more than once. Each time you do so, choose a different eligible cantrip.

Armor of Shadows PHB'24 p155

You can cast Mage Armor on yourself without expending a spell slot.

Ascendant Step PHB'24 p155

Prerequisite: Level 5+ Warlock

You can cast Levitate on yourself without expending a spell slot.

Devil's Sight PHB'24 p155

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You can see normally in Dim Light and Darkness—both magical and nonmagical—within 120 feet of yourself.

Devouring Blade PHB'24 p155

Prerequisites: Level 12+ Warlock, Thirsting Blade

The Extra Attack of your Thirsting Blade invocation confers two extra attacks rather than one.

Eldritch Mind PHB'24 p155

You have Advantage on Constitution saving throws that you make to maintain Concentration.

Eldritch Smite PHB'24 p155

Prerequisites: Level 5+ Warlock, Pact of the Blade

Once per turn when you hit a creature with your pact weapon, you can expend a Pact Magic spell slot to deal an extra 1d8 Force damage to the target, plus another 1d8 per level of the spell slot, and you can give the target the Prone condition if it is Huge or smaller.

Eldritch Spear PHB'24 p155

Prerequisites: Level 2+ Warlock, a Warlock Cantrip That Deals Damage

Choose one of your known Warlock cantrips that deals damage and has a range of 10+ feet. When you cast that spell, its range increases by a number of feet equal to 30 times your Warlock level.

Repeatable. You can gain this invocation more than once. Each time you do so, choose a different eligible cantrip.

Fiendish Vigor PHB'24 p155

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You can cast False Life on yourself without expending a spell slot. When you cast the spell with this feature, you don't roll the die for the Temporary Hit Points; you automatically get the highest number on the die.

Gaze of Two Minds PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 5+ Warlock

You can use a Bonus Action to touch a willing creature and perceive through its senses until the end of your next turn. As long as the creature is on the same plane of existence as you, you can take a Bonus Action on subsequent turns to

maintain this connection, extending the duration until the end of your next turn. The connection ends if you don't maintain it in this way.

While perceiving through the other creature's senses, you benefit from any special senses possessed by that creature, and you can cast spells as if you were in your space or the other creature's space if the two of you are within 60 feet of each other.

Gift of the Depths

PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 5+ Warlock

You can breathe underwater, and you gain a Swim Speed equal to your Speed.

You can also cast Water Breathing once without expending a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast it in this way again when you finish a Long Rest.

Gift of the Protectors

PHB'24 p156

Prerequisites: Level 9+ Warlock, Pact of the Tome

A new page appears in your Book of Shadows when you conjure it. With your permission, a creature can take an action to write its name on that page, which can contain a number of names equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one name).

When any creature whose name is on the page is reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright, the creature magically drops to 1 Hit Point instead. Once this magic is triggered, no creature can benefit from it until you finish a Long Rest.

As a Magic action, you can erase a name on the page by touching it.

Investment of the Chain Master

PHB'24 p156

Prerequisites: Level 5+ Warlock, Pact of the Chain

When you cast Find Familiar, you infuse the summoned familiar with a measure of your eldritch power, granting the creature the following benefits.

Aerial or Aquatic. The familiar gains either a Fly Speed or a Swim Speed (your choice) of 40 feet.

Quick Attack. As a Bonus Action, you can command the familiar to take the Attack action.

Necrotic or Radiant Damage. Whenever the familiar deals Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage, you can make it deal Necrotic or Radiant damage instead.

Your Save DC. If the familiar forces a creature to make a saving throw, it uses your spell save DC.

Resistance. When the familiar takes damage, you can take a Reaction to grant it Resistance against that damage.

Lessons of the First Ones

PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You have received knowledge from an elder entity of the multiverse, allowing you to gain one Origin feat of your choice.

Repeatable. You can gain this invocation more than once. Each time you do so, choose a different Origin feat.

Lifedrinker

PHB'24 p156

Prerequisites: Level 9+ Warlock, Pact of the Blade

Once per turn when you hit a creature with your pact weapon, you can deal an extra 1d6 Necrotic, Psychic, or Radiant damage (your choice) to the creature, and you can expend one of your Hit Point Dice to roll it and regain a number of Hit Points equal to the roll plus your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 Hit Point).

Mask of Many Faces PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You can cast Disguise Self without expending a spell slot.

Master of Myriad Forms PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 5+ Warlock

You can cast Alter Self without expending a spell slot.

Misty Visions PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You can cast Silent Image without expending a spell slot.

One with Shadows PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 5+ Warlock

While you're in an area of Dim Light or Darkness, you can cast Invisibility on yourself without expending a spell slot.

Otherworldly Leap PHB'24 p156

Prerequisite: Level 2+ Warlock

You can cast Jump on yourself without expending a spell slot.

Pact of the Blade PHB'24 p156

As a Bonus Action, you can conjure a pact weapon in your hand—a Simple or Martial Melee weapon of your choice with which you bond—or create a bond with a magic weapon you touch; you can't bond with a magic weapon if someone else is attuned to it or another Warlock is bonded with it. Until the bond ends, you have proficiency with the weapon, and you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus.

Whenever you attack with the bonded weapon, you can use your Charisma modifier for the attack and damage rolls instead of using Strength or Dexterity; and you can cause the weapon to deal Necrotic, Psychic, or Radiant damage or its normal damage type.

Your bond with the weapon ends if you use this feature's Bonus Action again, if the weapon is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 minute or more, or if you die. A conjured weapon disappears when the bond ends.

Pact of the Chain PHB'24 p157

You learn the Find Familiar spell and can cast it as a Magic action without expending a spell slot.

When you cast the spell, you choose one of the normal forms for your familiar or one of the following special forms: Imp, Pseudodragon, Quasit, Skeleton, Slaad Tadpole, Sphinx of Wonder, Sprite, or Venomous Snake (see appendix B for the familiar's stat block).

Additionally, when you take the Attack action, you can forgo one of your own attacks to allow your familiar to make one attack of its own with its Reaction.

Pact of the Tome PHB'24 p157

Stitching together strands of shadow, you conjure forth a book in your hand at the end of a Short or Long Rest. This Book of Shadows (you determine its appearance) contains eldritch magic that only you can access, granting you the benefits below. The book disappears if you conjure another book with this feature or if you die.

Cantrips and Rituals. When the book appears, choose three cantrips, and choose two level 1 spells that have the Ritual tag. The spells can be from any class's spell list, and they must be spells you don't already have prepared. While the book is on your person, you have the chosen spells prepared, and they function as Warlock spells for you.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use the book as a Spellcasting Focus.

Repelling Blast

PHB'24 p157

Prerequisites: Level 2+ Warlock, a Warlock Cantrip That Deals Damage via an Attack Roll

Choose one of your known Warlock cantrips that requires an attack roll. When you hit a Large or smaller creature with that cantrip, you can push the creature up to 10 feet straight away from you.

Repeatable. You can gain this invocation more than once. Each time you do so, choose a different eligible cantrip.

Thirsting Blade

PHB'24 p157

Prerequisites: Level 5+ Warlock, Pact of the Blade

You gain the Extra Attack feature for your pact weapon only. With that feature, you can attack twice with the weapon instead of once when you take the Attack action on your turn.

Visions of Distant Realms

PHB'24 p157

Prerequisite: Level 9+ Warlock

You can cast Arcane Eye without expending a spell slot.

Whispers of the Grave

PHB'24 p157

Prerequisite: Level 7+ Warlock

You can cast Speak with Dead without expending a spell slot.

Witch Sight

PHB'24 p157

Prerequisite: Level 15+ Warlock

You have Truesight with a range of 30 feet.

Level 2: Magical Cunning

PHB'24 p154

You can perform an esoteric rite for 1 minute. At the end of it, you regain expended Pact Magic spell slots but no more than a number equal to half your maximum (round up). Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 3: Warlock Subclass

PHB'24 p154

You gain a Warlock subclass of your choice. A subclass is a specialization that grants you features at certain Warlock levels. For the rest of your career, you gain each of your subclass's features that are of your Warlock level or lower.

Undead Patron RHW

Defy Death for Profane Power

You've made a pact with a creature that defies the cycle of life and death: a powerful lich, a vampire, or another entity of undeath. Having once been mortal, these ancient patrons know firsthand the paths of ambition and the routes past the doors of death. They eagerly share this profane knowledge and other secrets with those who work their will among the living.

Level 3: Form of Dread RHW

As a Bonus Action, you transform into an avatar of your patron's dreadful power, gaining the benefits below for 1 minute, until you have the Incapacitated condition, or until you end the form (no action required). You can transform a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Facsimile of Life. You gain Temporary Hit Points equal to 1d10 plus your Warlock level.

Fearless Form. You have Immunity to the Frightened condition. If you are Frightened when you transform, the condition immediately ends for you.

Frightful Avatar. Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack roll, you can force it to make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the target has the Frightened condition until the end of your next turn.

Level 3: Undead Spells RHW

The magic of your patron ensures you always have certain spells ready; when you reach a Warlock level specified in the Undead Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Undead Spells

Warlock Level	Spells
3	Bane, Blindness/Deafness, Phantasmal Force, Ray of Sickness
5	Speak with Dead, Summon Undead
7	Greater Invisibility, Phantasmal Killer
9	Antilife Shell, Cloudkill

Level 4: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p155

You gain the Ability Score Improvement feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. You gain this feature again at Warlock levels 8, 12, and 16.

Level 6: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p155

You gain a feature from your Warlock subclass.

Level 6: Grave Touched RHW

Your patron's powers have a profound effect on your body and magic, granting you the following benefits.

Arcane Necrosis. Necrotic damage from your attacks, Warlock spells, and Warlock features ignores Resistance to Necrotic damage. Once per turn when you cast a spell that deals damage, you can change that spell's damage type to Necrotic.

Dreaded Necrosis. When you hit a creature with an attack roll and deal Necrotic damage while using your Form of Dread, you can roll one additional damage die when determining the Necrotic damage the target takes. You can use this benefit only once per turn.

Undead Endurance. You don't gain Exhaustion levels from dehydration, malnutrition, or suffocation. In addition, you don't need to sleep, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Level 8: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p155

You gain the Ability Score Improvement Feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 9: Contact Patron PHB'24 p155

In the past, you usually contacted your patron through intermediaries. Now you can communicate directly; you always have the Contact Other Plane spell prepared. With this feature, you can cast the spell without expending a spell slot to contact your patron, and you automatically succeed on the spell's saving throw.

Once you cast the spell with this feature, you can't do so in this way again until you finish a Long Rest.

Level 10: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p155

You gain a feature from your Warlock subclass.

Level 10: Necrotic Husk RHW

Your connection to undeath saturates your body. You gain the following benefits.

Necrotic Resilience. You have Resistance to Necrotic damage. While using your Form of Dread, you have Immunity to Necrotic damage.

Unholy Resuscitation. If you drop to 0 Hit Points and don't die outright, you can cause your body to erupt with deathly energy. Each creature of your choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from you makes a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC, taking Necrotic damage equal to 2d10 plus your Charisma modifier on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Your Hit Points then change to twice your Warlock level, and you gain 1 Exhaustion level.

Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Level 11: Mystic Arcanum PHB'24 p155

Your patron grants you a magical secret called an arcanum. Choose one level 6 Warlock spell as this arcanum.

You can cast your arcanum spell once without expending a spell slot, and you must finish a Long Rest before you can cast it in this way again.

As shown in the Warlock Features table, you gain another Warlock spell of your choice that can be cast in this way when you reach Warlock levels 13 (level 7 spell), 15 (level 8 spell), and 17 (level 9 spell). You regain all uses of your Mystic Arcanum when you finish a Long Rest.

Whenever you gain a Warlock level, you can replace one of your arcanum spells with another Warlock spell of the same level.

Level 12: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p155

You gain the Ability Score Improvement Feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 13: Mystic Arcanum PHB'24 p155

You gain a level 7 Warlock Spell of your choice.

Level 14: Subclass Feature PHB'24 p155

You gain a feature from your Warlock subclass.

Level 14: Superior Dread RHW

Your Form of Dread improves, granting you the following benefits while you are using it.

Dread Resistance. You have Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage.

Ghostly Flight. You have a Fly Speed equal to your Speed and can hover. You can move through creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain, but you take 1d10 Force damage if you end your turn inside a creature or an object.

Profane Casting. Whenever you cast a Warlock spell from the Conjuration or Necromancy school, you cast it without any Verbal, Somatic, or Material components, except Material components that are costly or consumed.

Level 15: Mystic Arcanum PHB'24 p155

You gain a level 8 Warlock Spell of your choice.

Level 16: Ability Score Improvement PHB'24 p155

You gain the Ability Score Improvement Feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify.

Level 17: Mystic Arcanum PHB'24 p155

You gain a level 9 Warlock Spell of your choice.

Level 19: Epic Boon PHB'24 p155

You gain an Epic Boon feat or another feat of your choice for which you qualify. Boon of Fate is recommended.

Level 20: Eldritch Master PHB'24 p155

When you use your Magical Cunning feature, you regain all your expended Pact Magic spell slots.

Echoing Soul RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

You experience echoes from a past or alternate life. You gain the following features.

Channeled Prowess. You have proficiency in two skills of your choice.

In addition, choose one skill you have proficiency in. You gain Expertise in that skill. Whenever you finish a Long Rest, you can change your choice for this benefit.

Inherent Tongues. You know one additional language of your choice, which you choose from the language tables in the Player's Handbook.

Intrusive Echoes. Immediately after you make a D20 Test and roll a 1 on the d20, memories and sensations from your soul's other life threaten to overtake you. Make a Constitution saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you have the Incapacitated condition until the end of your next turn. While you are Incapacitated in this way, your Speed is halved.

Gathered Whispers RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

You are haunted by a cacophony of whispering spirits only you can hear. You gain the following features.

Spirit Whispers. You learn the Message spell and can cast it without Material components. Additionally, you always have the Augury spell prepared. You can cast it without a spell slot or spell components, and you must finish a Long Rest before you can cast it in this way again. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this benefit (choose when you select this feat).

Unearthly Scream. When you are hit by an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to channel your haunting spirits into a protective, otherworldly scream. You can add your Proficiency Bonus to your AC against that attack, potentially causing it to miss. You can use this benefit a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Voices from Beyond. Immediately after you make a D20 Test and roll a 1 on the d20, the haunting voices rise to a ghastly volume. Make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you have the Deafened condition until the end of your next turn. While Deafened, you have Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls.

Living Shadow RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

The shadow you cast is animate and ever-present—sometimes it even acts according to its own will. You gain the following features.

Grasping Shadow. You learn the Mage Hand spell and can cast it without spell components. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell (choose when you select this feat).

Lengthened Strike. When you make a melee attack roll as part of the Attack or Magic action on your turn, you can increase your reach for that attack by 10 feet, as your shadow stretches to aid you. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Ominous Will. Immediately after you make a D20 Test and roll a 1 on the d20, your shadow attempts to exert its will. Make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you have the Incapacitated condition until the start of your next turn, at which point you must roll on the Shadow's Will table to determine what you do during that turn.

Shadow's Will

1d8	Behavior
1	You don't take an action or a Bonus Action, and you use all your movement to move. Roll 1d4 for the direction: 1, north; 2, east; 3, south; or 4, west.
2-6	You don't move or take a Bonus Action, and you take the Attack action to make one melee attack against a random creature within reach. If none are within reach, you take no action.
7-8	You have the Prone condition, and your turn ends.

Mist Walker

RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

You know how to slip through the Mists' grasp, but this freedom comes at a price: If you remain in one area for too long, the Mists find you and drain your life force. You gain the following features.

Domain Traveler. When you enter the Mists intent on reaching a specific domain, you are treated as if you possess a Mist talisman keyed to that domain. To use this feature, you must know the name of the domain you have chosen as your destination, but you don't need to have previously visited that land. This trait doesn't allow you to bypass domain borders closed by a Darklord's will.

Mist Walk. When you take damage or fail a saving throw to avoid or end the Grappled or Restrained condition, you can take a Reaction and teleport up to 15 feet to an unoccupied space you can see. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Poisoned Roots. When you finish a Long Rest, the world around you in a 10-mile radius becomes a siphon that leeches away at your vitality. Whenever you finish a Short Rest in that area, make a Constitution saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you get no benefits from finishing that rest.

Second Skin

RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

There is another side of you that most people never see: a beast, a terrifying avenger, or a walking nightmare. You gain the following features.

Alternate Form. You always have the Alter Self spell prepared. You can cast it without a spell slot or spell components, and you must finish a Long Rest before you can cast it in this way again. You can also cast it using spell slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell (choose when you select this feat).

When you cast Alter Self without a spell slot using this feature, it doesn't require Concentration.

Involuntary Change. Certain circumstances can involuntarily trigger your transformation. When you select this feat, roll on the Change Catalyst table to determine what triggers your change.

After you experience the catalyst, at the start of your next turn, make a Charisma saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you immediately use Alternate Form to cast Alter Self without a spell slot. If you've already expended the use of that feature, you instead have the Stunned condition until the start of your next turn.

Change Catalyst

1d6	Catalyst
1	Seeing a particular phase of the moon
2	Smelling the scent of a certain type of flower
3	Hearing temple bells ringing
4	Hearing a particular melody
5	Touching pure silver with your bare skin
6	Seeing someone who resembles a specific individual

Symbiotic Being RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

A second being resides within your body, offering knowledge and assistance while furthering its own agenda. You gain the following features.

Entwined Existence. The symbiote can't be targeted. If you die, so does your symbiote. If you are returned to life, your symbiote also revives.

Second Mind. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills: Arcana, Deception, History, Intimidation, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Religion, Perception, or Persuasion. You also know one additional language of your choice, chosen from the language tables in the Player's Handbook.

Sustained Symbiosis. When you fail a saving throw, you can take a Reaction and expend one of your Hit Dice. Roll the die and add the number rolled to the saving throw, potentially turning the failure into a success.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Symbiotic Agenda. Immediately after you make a D20 Test and roll a 1 on the d20, your symbiote attempts to assert control. Make a Charisma saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you have the Charmed condition for 1d12 hours. While Charmed, you must try to follow the symbiote's commands and further its goals, as determined by the DM. Whenever you take damage, you can repeat this save, ending the effect on a success.

At the DM's discretion, you might make this saving throw whenever you act contrary to the symbiote's agenda.

Watchers RHW

Dark Gift Feat (Prerequisite: Ravenloft Campaign)

Something unnatural is always watching you, taking the form of scurrying vermin and other eerie creatures. You gain the following features.

Borrowed Eyes. You always have the Beast Sense and Speak with Animals spells prepared. You can cast each spell without a spell slot, and you must finish a Long Rest before you can cast it in this way again. You can also cast these spells using spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Heightened Suspicion. Whenever you take the Search action, you can roll 1d4 and add the number rolled to any ability check made as part of that action.

Incessant Watchers. You have Disadvantage on saving throws made against the Scrying spell.

In addition, immediately after you make a D20 Test and roll a 1 on the d20, paranoia threatens to overwhelm you. Make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13 plus your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, you have Disadvantage on D20 Tests for 1 minute. You can repeat the save at the end of each of your turns, ending the effect early on a success.

Haunted One

RHW

Ability Scores: Constitution, Wisdom, Charisma

Feat: Survivor or a Dark Gift feat of your choice

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana and Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Choose one kind of Gaming Set

Equipment: Choose A or B: (A) Gaming Set (same as above), Crowbar, Holy Water (1 flask), Mirror, Oil(2 flasks), Signal Whistle, Tinderbox, Traveler's Clothes, 5 Torches, Waterskin, and 14 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Investigator

RHW

Ability Scores: Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma

Feat: Sharp Eye or a Dark Gift feat of your choice

Skill Proficiencies: Insight and Investigation

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise Kit

Equipment: Choose A or B: (A) Disguise Kit, Manacles, Shovel, Traveler's Clothes, 3 Vials, and 16 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Mist Wanderer

RHW

Ability Scores: Dexterity, Constitution, Wisdom

Feat: A Dark Gift feat of your choice (Mist Walker is recommended)

Skill Proficiencies: Survival and Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: Choose one kind of Artisan's Tools

Equipment: Choose A or B: (A) Artisan's Tools (same as above), Lamp, Oil (5 flasks), Pouch, Rope, Tinderbox, Traveler's Clothes, and 30 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Spirit Medium

RHW

Ability Scores: Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom

Feat: A Dark Gift feat of your choice (Gathered Whispers is recommended)

Skill Proficiencies: Insight and Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Choose one kind of Gaming Set

Equipment: Choose A or B: (A) Dagger, Gaming Set (same as above), Basket, Bell, 8 Candles, Ink, Ink Pen, Paper (5 sheets), Tinderbox, Traveler's Clothes, and 32 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Dhampir RHW

Creature Type: Humanoid

Size: Medium (about 4-7 feet tall) or Small (about 2-4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species

Speed: 35 feet, Climb equal to your walking speed

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Spider Climb. You have a Climb Speed equal to your Speed. When you reach character level 3, you can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and along ceilings while leaving your hands free.

Trace of Undeath. You have Resistance to Necrotic damage.

Vampiric Bite. When you use your Unarmed Strike and deal damage, you can choose to bite with your fangs. You deal Piercing damage equal to 1d4 plus your Constitution modifier instead of the normal damage of an Unarmed Strike.

In addition, when you deal this damage to a creature that isn't a Construct or an Undead, you can empower yourself in one of the following ways:

Drain. You regain Hit Points equal to the Piercing damage dealt.

Strengthen. You gain a bonus to the next ability check or attack roll you make within the next minute; the bonus is equal to the Piercing damage dealt.

You can empower yourself with this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Hexblood RHW

Creature Type: Fey

Size: Medium (about 4-7 feet tall) or Small (about 2-4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species

Speed: 30 feet

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Eerie Token. As a Bonus Action, you can create a magical token by harmlessly removing a lock of hair, detaching a nail, or using some other method. While the token exists, you gain the following benefits:

Distant Message. As a Magic action, you can send a telepathic message of 25 words or fewer to a creature holding or carrying the token, as long as you are within 10 miles of it.

Remote Viewing. If you are within 10 miles of the token, you can take a Magic action to extend your senses through the token for 1 minute, until you have the Incapacitated condition, or until you end this state (no action required). During this state, you can see and hear from the token as if you were located where it is. When this state ends, the token is harmlessly destroyed.

Unless the token is destroyed early, it lasts until you finish a Long Rest. Once you create a token using this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Hex Magic. You always have the Disguise Self and Hex spells prepared. You can cast each spell once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spells you cast with this trait (choose the ability when you select this species).

Lupin RHW

Creature Type: Humanoid

Size: Medium (about 4-7 feet tall) or Small (about 2-4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species

Speed: 30 feet

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Feral Pounce. Your Unarmed Strikes deal Slashing damage instead of Bludgeoning damage. In addition, when you hit a creature with an Unarmed Strike as part of the Attack action on your turn, you can use both the Damage and the Shove options. You can use this benefit only once per turn.

Howl. As a Bonus Action, you let out an unearthly howl. Each creature of your choice within 15 feet of you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus) or have Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws until the start of your next turn.

You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Werewolf Instincts. You have proficiency in the Perception, Stealth, or Survival skill.

Reborn RHW

Creature Type: Humanoid

Size: Medium (about 4-7 feet tall) or Small (about 2-4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species

Speed: 30 feet

Escaped Death. You have Advantage on Death Saving Throws.

Everlasting. You don't gain Exhaustion levels from dehydration, malnutrition, or suffocation. You don't need to sleep, and magic can't put you to sleep. You can finish a Long Rest in 4 hours if you spend those hours in an inactive, motionless state, during which you retain consciousness.

Knowledge from a Past Life. You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.

In addition, you can temporarily peer into the past to aid you in the present. When you fail an ability check, you can roll 1d6 and add the number rolled to the d20, potentially turning the failure into a success. You can do this a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Strange Endurance. You have Resistance to one of the following damage types of your choice: Cold, Necrotic, or Poison.

Chapter 2: Domains of Ravenloft

By the light of the full moon, villagers in Kartakass undergo a terrifying transformation

Sean A. Murray

At the unfathomable edge of the Shadowfell lie the Domains of Dread, realms bound by Mists where magic and reality twist into nightmare. This chapter for DMs explores the most terrifying of the Domains of Dread. Among other tools, each featured domain includes the following details:

Domain. This initial section introduces the domain, its unique horrors, and notable locations.

Darklord. The domain's Darklord, their stat block, effects they create within their domain, how they close their domain's borders (see the introduction), and details of their lair appear here.

Adventures. This section provides guidance on creating adventures in the domain, a campaign outline, and short adventures.

This chapter concludes with an overview of additional domains.

Tarokka and the Mists

Tarokka fortune-telling cards (detailed in the appendix) have special relationships with domains and their Darklords.

Tarokka Mist Talismans

Each Domain of Dread is aligned with a tarokka card. A character with a tarokka deck can use it to travel between domains. While in the Mists, the deck's bearer can draw a random card from the deck; that card serves as a Mist talisman (see the introduction), allowing travel to the domain it is aligned with. A tarokka deck can be used in this way once every 24 hours. A list of domains and their aligned tarokka cards appears later in this book.

Darklords and the Tarokka

Every Domain of Dread has a tarokka card that opposes it—one hinting at the truth of the domain's Darklord. If a domain's opposed tarokka card is drawn during a tarokka reading in that domain, that domain's Darklord becomes aware of the reading and its participants. When this occurs, the Darklord can choose to see through the eyes of the tarokka user and speak through them for 1 minute. The Darklord might make their presence known, level a threat, or misinterpret the cards. A tarokka reader has no memory of what a Darklord uses them to say.

Domains of Ravenloft Guide

The table below lists the Dread Domains and the respective Darklord that resides there.

Domains & Darklords

Domain (Alphabetical)	Darklord
Barovia	Strahd von Zarovich
Borca	Ivana Boritsi and Ivan Dilisnya
Darkon	None (formerly Azalin Rex)
Dementlieu	Saidra d'Honaire
Falkovnia	Vladeska Drakov
Har'Akir	Ankhtepot
Hazlan	Hazlik
Innsmouth	Cthulhu
Kalakeri	Ramya Vasavadan
Kartakass	Harkon Lukas
Lamordia	Viktra Mordenheim
Mordent	Wilfred Godefroy
Shadowlands	Ebonbane
Sithicus	Lord Soth
Tepest	Mother Lorinda
Valachan	Chakuna

Barovia

Domain of the First Vampire

Darklord: Strahd von Zarovich

Genre: Gothic horror

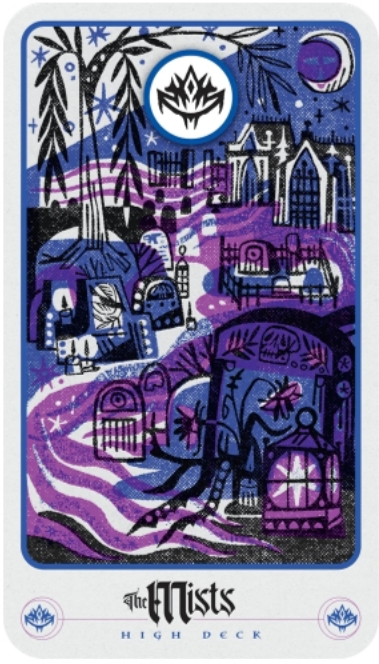
Hallmarks: Undead despot, notorious haunted stronghold, tragic resurrection

Mist Talismans: Barovian wine bottle, von Zarovich crest, Mark of the Raven talisman

Aligned Tarokka Card: Darklord

Opposed Tarokka Card: Mists

Pam Wishbow



Pam Wishbow

In Barovia, the night is a curse. As darkness falls, wicked souls slip from the spires of Castle Ravenloft to work the will of an immortal overlord. This is the realm of the vampire Count Strahd von Zarovich, whose depravities have doomed him and his land to endless cycles of obsession and despair.

The howls of wolves and shrieks of ravens echo through the dismal valleys and oppressive forests of Barovia. In isolated communities, superstitious villagers find the brightness in their lives smothered by dread of their aloof overlord and other festering evils. These Barovians fear the night, as agents of the devil Strahd watch in the dark and claim whatever he desires. Yet few in Barovia realize their torments have played out again and again. In every generation, echoes of Strahd's past reemerge, compelling and confounding the Darklord as he endlessly obsesses over the one victim who's eluded him for centuries.

Domain Features

Barovia is known for the following features:

The Devil Strahd. Few have seen Count von Zarovich, but all know he dwells in Castle Ravenloft, a citadel from which few visitors return. Strahd is infamous for viciously executing any who flagrantly break his laws, but otherwise he rarely interferes in the lives of his people. Some whisper that he is a vampire.

Haunted Tales. The stories of Barovia's people are full of hidden evils: accursed ruins, portentous ravens, secretive cults, treacherous witches, vicious werewolves, and worse.

Isolation and Suspicion. Barovia is a realm of wolf-prowled forests and treacherous mountains where the sun is obscured. The land's superstitious people live in scattered villages. They distrust strangers, fearing they're agents of the count.

Locations in Barovia

Barovia is a land of long shadows where ancient wildernesses strangle the ruins of a near-forgotten empire. Mysteries pervade the domain, and those who leave the relative safety of Barovia's dismal settlements enter perilous lands where mortals aren't welcome.

The village of Barovia is described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Barovia Locations table.

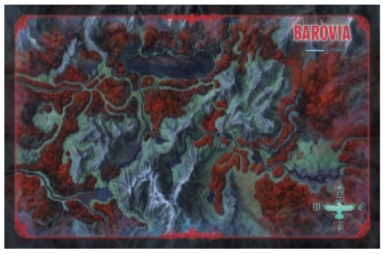
Village of Barovia

Lying in the shadow of Castle Ravenloft, the village of Barovia teeters on the brink of ruin. Its few residents rarely venture from their homes, suspecting their neighbors of wickedness and fearing evils in the night. Their dread is largely justified, as wolves, ghosts, and vampire spawn haunt the town, and many locals have been consumed by callousness or wicked temptations.

A rare exception to the village's cold desperation can be found at the local tavern, the Blood of the Vine. Those few who oppose Strahd's evil congregate here—under the covert oversight of the count's agents.

Map 2.1: Barovia

Damien Mammoliti



Player Version

Damien Mammoliti

Barovia Locations

Location	Description
Amber Temple	A society of mages constructed the Amber Temple long ago to imprison vestiges of malevolent entities. The mages are long dead; mighty evil forces now obsess over the temple's secrets.
Argynvostholt	The fortified Argynvostholt mansion lies in ruins haunted by the restless spirits of a knightly order destroyed by Strahd. A statue of a regal silver dragon stands before the manor's entrance.
Balinok Mountains	Barovia spans valleys among the Balinok Mountains. Snow crowns the highest peak, Mount Baratok, while the smaller Mount Ghakis is riddled with deep caves.
Castle Ravenloft	The grim castle of Count Strahd von Zarovich looms over the village of Barovia. The haunted castle contains Strahd's supernatural servants and the secrets of the Darklord's origins.
Gates of Barovia	Mighty gates flanked by decapitated statues of soldiers stand along the Old Svalich Road. They open mysteriously for travelers but allow only Vistani to leave the domain to the east.
Krezk	Above the fortified, wooded village of Krezk rises the Abbey of Saint Markovia. Here, a mysterious abbot tends to patients but, in doing so, leaves them permanently changed.
Old Bonegrinder	An ominous windmill called Old Bonegrinder is home to a coven of night hags that create magical pastries. Those who consume the pastries enter a stupor filled with vivid, joyful dreams.
Ruins of Berez	Moldering ruins are all that remain of Berez, a village that denied Strahd's will and earned his wrath. Nearby stands a statue of a kneeling peasant clutching a rose.
Svalich Woods	Packs of wolves, dire wolves, and werewolves prowl the Svalich Woods, hunting those who oppose Strahd. Strange hermits and witches lurk within the deepest reaches.
Tser Pool	The Vistani who camp near the Tser Pool lake are often joined by other wanderers. This is also the home of the seer Madam Eva (see chapter 5), who knows much of Strahd and the Mists.
Vallaki	The walled town of Vallaki hosts regular festivals to lift the spirits of its despondent inhabitants. Those who don't participate risk being punished as malcontents.
Yester Hill	A cult of druids devoted to Strahd conducts rituals amid the circle of boulders atop Yester Hill. The Mists nearby reflect a vision of the count's ancestral home in the distance.

Strahd von Zarovich

First of the Darklords

Anna Podedworna

"*I am the Ancient. I am the Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past. I am not dead. Nor am I alive. I am undead, forever.*"

— Strahd von Zarovich

Count Strahd von Zarovich has lost all he ever desired—over and over again. Tormented by the Dark Powers, Strahd is haunted by visions of his lost family and tarnished nobility. The count spends long years brooding in the depths of Castle Ravenloft, but a reincarnation of his obsession appears every generation: Tatyana. Each time Tatyana's reincarnation emerges, Strahd seeks to undo the failures of his past and find a way to win her love. Time and time again, Strahd's heartless, domineering nature causes his bloody history to repeat itself and drives Tatyana beyond his clutches.

A severe, aristocratic figure, the count has the bearing of a former soldier and the impatience of one used to being obeyed. He feels little but occasionally embraces the novelty of toying with amusing strangers or breaking the spirits of his enemies. During his unnaturally long existence, he has learned many occult secrets and mysteries of the Domains of Dread. Strahd's dignified bearing crumbles when someone breaks his laws or denies him what he desires. In such cases, Strahd makes bloody examples of his opponents, drawing out his vengeance into campaigns of terror.

Strahd von Zarovich

RHW p42

Medium Undead (Vampire), Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+9 (19)	204 (24d8 + 96)	40 ft., Climb 40 ft.	15 (XP 13,000, or 15,000 in lair; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	18	+4	+9	**Con**	18	+4	+4
Int	20	+5	+5	**Wis**	15	+2	+7	**Cha**	18	+4	+9

Skills Arcana +15, Perception +12, Religion +10, Stealth +14

Res. Necrotic

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 22

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Strahd dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Barovia.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Strahd fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. If Strahd drops to 0 Hit Points outside his resting place, he uses Shape-Shift to become mist (no action required). If he can't use Shape-Shift, he is destroyed. While Strahd has 0 Hit Points in mist form, he can't return to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, Strahd returns to his vampire form and has the Paralyzed condition until he regains any Hit Points, and he regains 1 Hit Point after spending 1 hour there.

Spider Climb. Strahd can climb difficult surfaces, including ceilings, without making an ability check.

Vampire Weakness. Strahd has these weaknesses:

Forbiddance. Strahd can't enter a residence without an invitation from an occupant.

Running Water. Strahd takes 20 Acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a weapon that deals Piercing damage is driven into Strahd's heart while Strahd has the Incapacitated condition in his resting place, Strahd has the Paralyzed condition until the weapon is removed.

Sunlight. Strahd takes 20 Radiant damage if he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. Strahd makes two Death Strike attacks. He can replace one of these attacks with a use of (A) Bite or (B) Spellcasting to cast Fireball if available.

Death Strike. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two hands.

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature within 5 feet that is willing or that has the Grappled, Incapacitated, or Restrained condition. *Failure:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and Strahd regains Hit Points equal to that amount. A Humanoid reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage rises the following night as a Vampire Spawn under Strahd's control, unless the Humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

Spellcasting. Strahd casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: Detect Thoughts, Fog Cloud, Mage Hand

2/day each: Animate Dead, Fireball, Gust of Wind, Mirror Image, Nondetection

1/day each: Greater Invisibility, Polymorph, Scrying

Bonus Actions

Charm. Strahd casts Charm Person, requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. When the spell is cast this way, its duration is 24 hours, and the Charmed target is a willing recipient of Strahd's Bite, the damage of which doesn't end the spell. When the spell ends, the target is unaware it was Charmed by Strahd.

Shape-Shift. If Strahd isn't in sunlight or running water, he shape-shifts into a Tiny bat (Speed 5 ft., Fly Speed 30 ft.), a Medium wolf (Speed 40 ft.), or a Medium cloud of mist (Speed 5 ft., Fly Speed 20 ft. [hover]), or he returns to his vampire form. Anything he is wearing transforms with him.

While in bat or wolf form, Strahd can't speak. His game statistics, other than his size and Speed, are unchanged.

While in mist form, Strahd can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless and can enter an enemy's space and stop there. If air can pass through a space, Strahd can do so, but he can't pass through liquid. Strahd has Resistance to all damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Strahd can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Strahd regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Count's Command. Strahd casts Command (level 2 version), requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Striding Strike. Strahd moves up to half his Speed, and he makes one Death Strike attack.

Regional Effects

Barovia is altered by Strahd's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Strahd can close or open the borders to Barovia at will. While the borders are closed, noxious fog suffuses the Mists surrounding Barovia. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Dreadful Darkness. While in an area of Darkness, creatures other than Strahd and creatures of his choice have Disadvantage on saving throws to end or avoid the Frightened condition.

Jealous Heart. When a character receives Heroic Inspiration but already has it, that character can't give it to another character in the group.

If Strahd dies, these effects end immediately.

Strahd's Tale

Count Strahd von Zarovich was a ruthless conqueror. Retiring after years of war, Strahd settled in the beautiful valley where he'd won his greatest victory. There, in the way of his ancestors, he spilled his blood into the earth, sealing a pact between himself and the land. In honor of his parents, King Barov and Queen Ravenovia, he named the valley Barovia and constructed his home, Castle Ravenloft.

Strahd invited his few remaining family members to live with him at Castle Ravenloft and eventually was joined by his younger brother, Sergei. Sergei was everything Strahd wasn't—youthful, empathic, and warm. Soon after he arrived, the younger von Zarovich and a local villager named Tatyana fell in love. Strahd resented his brother, even more so after meeting Tatyana and being charmed by her pure kindness. Obsessed, Strahd sought to woo her but was rebuffed. Unwilling to accept her wishes or the idea of Sergei as his better, Strahd made a pact with ancient evil forces to regain his vitality and ensnare Tatyana's heart.

The day of Sergei and Tatyana's wedding, Strahd murdered Sergei and, to seal his pact, drank his brother's blood. He revealed his new might to Tatyana, expecting to enthrall her. Instead, horrified by Sergei's murder, Tatyana fled Strahd, ultimately leaping from the height of Castle Ravenloft and vanishing into the Mists. At the same time, traitors from among the castle's guards and wedding's guests rose up to assassinate Strahd. Despite countless wounds, Strahd didn't die. His bargain with the Dark Powers had made Strahd the multiverse's first vampire. A night of slaughter followed; when dawn touched the parapets of Castle Ravenloft, no living soul survived within. But Strahd remained.

Strahd's villainy and his connection to his land drew all of Barovia into the grip of the Dark Powers, which transplanted the vampire and his realm into the Shadowfell. This began a succession of torments that plague the count still. The Dark Powers' attentions have spilled forth to drag others into the Mists as well, giving rise to the Domains of Dread.

Strahd's Domain

Barovia is altered by Strahd's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Strahd can close or open the borders to Barovia at will. While the borders are closed, noxious fog suffuses the Mists surrounding Barovia. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Dreadful Darkness. While in an area of Darkness, creatures other than Strahd and creatures of his choice have Disadvantage on saving throws to end or avoid the Frightened condition.

Jealous Heart. When a character receives Heroic Inspiration but already has it, that character can't give it to another character in the group.

If Strahd dies, these effects end immediately.

Strahd's Lairs

While the notorious Castle Ravenloft is Strahd's home, it isn't his only redoubt in Barovia. Multiple bastions of evil serve as sanctuaries for the count and his servants, should fate demand.

Nightly the village of Vallaki bars its gates against attacks from wolves and deadlier predators

Richard Wright

Castle Ravenloft

Castle Ravenloft is Strahd von Zarovich's accursed sanctuary. Tormented spirits and Strahd's minions haunt the vast castle, each serving the count's schemes, reflecting some aspect of his depraved past, or protecting his coffin in the castle catacombs. Mementos of lost times and fallen heroes lie throughout the count's home, some of which might hold the key to his undoing. The adventure Curse of Strahd details Castle Ravenloft.

Von Zarovich Sanctuaries

Hidden across Barovia lie secret sanctuaries known only to Strahd and his servants. These crypt-like boltholes are hidden from the sun and exist primarily to shelter the count should he require. Over the centuries, Strahd has granted trusted servants access to some of these sanctuaries and used others in plots or experiments that he keeps distant from Castle Ravenloft. Still others Strahd has forgotten, allowing other evils to fester there. An example of one of these sites is depicted on map 2.2 and has the following features:

Count's Coffin. Hidden in each sanctuary lies a coffin bearing the von Zarovich crest. This might be obvious or in a space only accessible to vampires.

The Lord's Presence. Behind a vault-like iron door, an entry chamber holds a high-backed throne. Strahd forbids servants from using these symbols of his authority.

Servants' Space. Alcoves carved in the walls provide space for the coffins or bunks of Strahd's living or dead servants. Sometimes, the Darklord uses these spaces for arcane experiments or as makeshift prisons.

Adventures in Barovia

Adventures set in Barovia involve oppressive, gothic menace; suspicion; and the legendary threat of Strahd von Zarovich. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Castle Ravenloft, the accursed home of Count Strahd von Zarovich, casts its shadows across the village of Barovia and far beyond

Bastien Grivet

Horror in Barovia

Adventures in Barovia often include the following elements.

The Ancient, The Land

Strahd remains bound to Barovia and it to him in a way few rulers or Darklords understand. He knows when any creature enters or dies violently within Barovia, and he takes offense when someone slays his servants or the domain's wolves. Strahd can manifest a variety of dramatic effects, such as casting his voice on the wind, making his visage appear in the clouds, or changing the weather. These effects don't aid him in combat, but they contribute to making him feel like an oppressive and ever-present threat.

Incarnations of the Past

The subject of Strahd's obsession, Tatyana, perpetually reincarnates among the people of Barovia. No matter what form she takes, the Darklord unceasingly seeks her, determined to possess her and make her part of an idealized fantasy of his past. Tatyana's incarnation might be anyone, including a player character. If her incarnation is an NPC, roll on the Tatyana's Reincarnation and Connection to Strahd tables to inspire a new chapter in the count's tale of obsession.

Tatyana's Reincarnation

1d10	Tatyana's Reincarnation Is...
1	Anna, the keeper of what another Darklord desires—such as Ankhtepot's ka or Mordenheim's Unbreakable Heart (both detailed later in this book).
2	Ez d'Avenir (see chapter 5), a monster hunter.
3	Ireena Kolyana, adopted daughter of Burgomaster Indirovich of the village of Barovia.
4	Lyssa von Zarovich, a distant relative of Strahd's, who has become a vampire.
5	Nasseri and Yasmine, identical twins who serve the god Ezra.
6	Petra Rilenovich, an artist who paints images of what she calls "dream lives."
7	Quentin L'Argent, the dragonborn son of herders living near Argynvostholt.
8	Renoir Laurent, the son of Chantal Laurent, a woman Strahd abducted years ago.
9	Vanasia, a member of a far-ranging Vistani band or other group of mist wanderers.
10	Vasilka, a Flesh Golem or reborn who lives in the abbey of Krezk.

Connection to Strahd

1d10	Tatyana's Reincarnation...
1	Has weaponized their blood with poison that will put Strahd to sleep for a generation.
2	Is hidden from Strahd by another Darklord or some more mysterious evil.

1d10	Tatyana's Reincarnation...
3	Becomes trapped by a deceitful servant of Strahd, either bodily or by an effect such as a Magic Jar spell.
4	Knows of their reincarnations and seeks to end them by freeing Barovia from the Mists.
5	Lives a charmed life, unknowingly protected and cultivated by the count.
6	Misguidedly plans to redeem Strahd through their exceptional kindness or faith.
7	Uses magic to hide from Strahd by appearing elderly, childlike, or as a mysterious animal.
8	Searches for a relic that can weaken Strahd.
9	Seeks to join a group of adventurers and organize a siege of Castle Ravenloft.
10	Wants to resurrect past incarnations of Tatyana to battle Strahd.

Roots of Evil

As the first Domain of Dread, Barovia might serve an important role in the metaphysical underpinnings of the setting. Some Darklords might have emerged from the Mists first in Barovia, encountered Strahd, and found their ways to their own domains later. Others might have a particular interest in Barovia and in undoing Strahd's connection to his land. Consider these possibilities when developing plots involving conflicts between Darklords or escaping the Mists, as outlined in chapter 3.

Signs of the Count

Servants of Strahd are everywhere in Barovia. While in the domain, characters experience regular reminders that the Darklord watches them—and that they are unwelcome. Roll on the Strahd's Presence table to inspire such encounters.

Strahd's Presence

1d8	Strahd's Presence Is Suggested...
1	As clouds momentarily resemble clawed hands, gaping skulls, or Castle Ravenloft.
2	As wolves or ravens soundlessly follow the characters and mirror their actions.
3	By faded carvings or tapestries bearing the von Zarovich crest.
4	During a tarokka reading, when the Darklord card changes to resemble Strahd.
5	In a dream where a character becomes charmed or threatened by Strahd.
6	In a rustic shrine littered with vials of dried blood, snapped splinters, and wolf fangs.
7	When characters awake to find swarms of roosting bats or bloodless animal corpses.
8	When spying villagers try to eavesdrop on or steal small things from the characters.

Barovia Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Barovia involve communities oppressed by fear of Strahd and his cycles of obsession. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–5. The characters emerge from the Mists and seek shelter from danger in the village of Barovia, Krezk, or Vallaki. There they learn the people fear Count von Zarovich, and the characters might meet a reincarnation of Tatyana. They help strike back against agents of the count, such as deadly Wolves or Zombies.

Levels 6–8. The characters learn more of the count's history and about magical relics that might help oppose him. They seek these in haunted corners of the domain, facing servants of Strahd and remnants of his past, including Ghosts, Werewolves, and deadly Druids.

Levels 9–10. Armed with knowledge and magical weapons, the characters lay siege to Castle Ravenloft, facing Strahd's most terrifying servants and the count himself.

Blood o' the Vine

Adventure for Level 6 Characters

Situation. A discovery beneath the Blood of the Vine tavern in the village of Barovia has unleashed sinister magic, transforming the owners.

Hook. Disguised as a human, Urwin Martikov (Medium Wereraven; see chapter 5) of the Blue Water Inn in Vallaki hires the characters to investigate why the Blood of the Vine tavern in the village of Barovia has closed, claiming he was in negotiations with the owners to buy it. Urwin offers to pay each character 500 GP.

The Blood of the Vine tavern is one of the few places in the village of Barovia that welcomes strangers

Titus Lunter

Encounters

This adventure uses map 2.2: Blood of the Vine Tavern and consists of these encounters.

Corrupted Owners. The three human sisters who owned the Blood of the Vine tavern—Alenka, Mirabel, and Sorvina—have been transformed into the following ravenous embodiments of primal hunger:

Alenka (Relentless Slasher) wields kitchenware and prowls the first floor.

Mirabel (Medium Ghast Gravecaller) stalks the second floor with her two Ghoul servants.

Sorvina (Unspeakable Horror; see chapter 5) conducts strange rituals in the basement.

Taproom. Dust covers the taproom. Here, the animate corpse of Arik the barkeep mindlessly cleans pieces of shattered glassware at the bar. If attacked or otherwise interrupted, Arik falls to pieces.

Office. The office in the northeast corner of the first floor is cluttered with junk and unfinished notes to the count describing the activities of the tavern's patrons. This suggests the owners spied on the locals. If the characters have visited the tavern before, their activities are detailed. A trapdoor descends to an area beneath the tavern.

Private Dining Room. The dining room in the southeast corner of the second floor is strewn with broken dishes, rotten food, and pages from a destroyed book. The pages are from the journal of Mirabel, one of the inn's owners. Surviving entries note the following information:

First Entry. Mirabel's sister Sorvina discovered a hollow hidden under the tavern. Strange ruins lie amid the dirt walls. Sorvina wants to excavate them, hoping to find a tomb filled with treasures.

Second Entry. Sorvina's digging revealed strange standing stones. Mirabel worries about her sister, who's started whispering to herself as she obsesses over learning more about the stones.

Third Entry. Sorvina discovered the bones of some monster at the center of the standing stones. All three sisters are having nightmares from which they wake up ravenous. Sorvina claims the hunger is a blessing. Food has lost its taste, but the inn's patrons suddenly smell delicious.

Temple of Ravenkind. A circle of ancient menhirs carved with stylized ravens and sunbursts is partially unearthed beneath the tavern. The creature that was once Sorvina is here, chanting over a monstrous skeleton of black bones with stag horns and tusks. When she notices intruders, Sorvina howls, causing the bones to rise as a Minotaur Skeleton. Both it and Sorvina fight the characters to the death. When the skeleton is defeated, its bones remain intact.

Cursed Remains. The skeleton exudes evil magic. Casting Remove Curse on the monster destroys the skeleton. However, if a character touches the skeleton (while it's animate or otherwise), its spirit whispers to the character, bidding them to end its ancient curse. Doing so destroys the skeleton and grants the character the Second Skin Dark Gift. A character who already has a Dark Gift can't accept the curse.

Returning to Urwin. If the characters defeat the monsters in the tavern and return to Urwin, he pays them and shares that a benevolent relic, the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind, was created at a site like the one hidden under the tavern. The circle was used later to imprison a vicious spirit of the Svalich Woods. If the characters destroyed the skeleton, Urwin rewards them with two random Quaal's Feather Tokens. Each character also receives a bonus 1,400 XP.

Map 2.2: Blood of the Vine Tavern

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Map 2.2: Beneath the Tavern

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Map 2.2: Outside the Village

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Treacherous Blood

Adventure for Level 9 Characters

Situation. Lyssa von Zarovich (Medium, Chaotic Evil Vampire Nightbringer), a distant relative of Strahd, plots to undermine the count by unleashing her monstrous servants on Barovia.

Hook. A human resident of Vallaki named Ernst Larnak (Medium, Lawful Evil Spy) tells the characters that locals have seen figures excavating the churchyard in the ruins of Berez. He offers to pay 2,500 GP if they investigate. He doesn't share that his information comes from the count's servants.

Encounters

This adventure uses map 2.2: Von Zarovich Sanctuary and consists of these encounters.

Berez Churchyard. A stone slab covering a grave in the churchyard has been shattered, revealing stairs leading down to a von Zarovich sanctuary. There, two Vampire Spawn guardians fight trespassers.

Lyssa's Plot. Lyssa greets the characters in the sanctuary's central room. Observing that they don't look like servants of the count, she shares the following information:

- She is a distant relative of Count Strahd von Zarovich. She, too, is a vampire.
- She seeks to depose Strahd and raise Barovia to its deserved glory.
- With the aid of allies beyond the Mists, she has created servants immune to many of Strahd's powers. Now she needs to test them.

Regardless of whether the characters agree to aid Lyssa, she opens a door to the adjacent chamber and unleashes a pair of Vampire Mind Flayers. The monsters obey Lyssa's commands and fight the characters. Lyssa fights as well but flees if she takes damage, swearing her revenge.

Crypt. The chamber to the north holds the bloodless corpse of a mind flayer and a journal filled with accounts of strange dreams. The journal is a Mist talisman linked to the domain of Bluetspur (see "Other Domains of Dread" later in this book).

Hidden Chamber. A character who investigates the large room as a Study action and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds evidence of a bricked-over hidden chamber in the east wall. Characters can physically remove the wall in 1 hour (half that time if they have Mason's Tools).

Elder Evil. Strahd buried a foe in a coffin behind the main chamber's east wall. Opening the coffin releases a Vampire Nosferatu and a Swarm of Infesting Insects (both detailed in chapter 5) that fight to the death. Also in the coffin is a Gem of Brightness.

Conclusion. If the characters defeat or drive off Lyssa, each character gains a bonus 2,600 XP.

Map 2.2: Von Zarovich Sanctuary

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Borca

Domain of Desire and Deceit

Darklords: Ivana Boritsi and Ivan Dilisnya

Genres: Gothic horror and psychological horror

Hallmarks: Political intrigue, poison, revenge

Mist Talismans: Dram of sweet-smelling poison, flame-singed love letter, tarnished signet ring

Aligned Tarokka Card: Beggar

Opposed Tarokka Card: Tempter

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

The noble families of Borca engage in an endless war of conspiracies and lethal betrayals as they pursue influence, thrills, and age-old rivalries. People here value guile and callousness, and none embody those traits better than the domain's two Darklords: the genius poisoner Ivana Boritsi and the childishly cruel stalker Ivan Dilisnya.

Beyond the fashionable holdings of Borca's elite, commoners struggle against crime, poverty, and starvation. In scattered villages and tenement-filled cities, locals view nobles as celebrities, and the commoners' idealized vision of noble life leads them to mimic the aristocrats' callousness and appetite for empty fads. Desperate commoners are tempted into debt and depravity in pursuit of nobles' favor and passing fancies. Those who don't bend to the whims of Borca's elite face humiliation before they're crushed.

Domain Features

Borca is known for the following features:

Two Darklords. Ivana Boritsi and Ivan Dilisnya are both Darklords of Borca. They control the domain equally—one of countless facts that contributes to their mutual loathing.

Cruel Intentions. Borca's most influential families are vicious rivals bound by blood, politics, and business. Their rivalries unfold in an endless shadow war of lies, shifting alliances, and assassinations. The nobles value appearances above all else; they favor stylish poisons, clever clockwork devices, and public embarrassment in their plots.

Desperate Sycophants. Commoners own little, renting homes in crowded cities or rural villages that serve noble interests. Many commoners desperately court the favor of the elite.

Noble Intrigue. Nobles control all aspects of Borcan society. They squabble over artistic, political, and religious influence to feed their gluttonous egos and fill their idle lives. The Boritsi family holds the greatest influence.

Locations in Borca

The impoverished lands of Borca languish in the shadow of opulent noble estates and garish monuments to greed. The exploited land bears the scars of age-old rivalries and the hiding places of noble secrets.

The capital of Levkarest is described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Borca Locations table.

Levkarest

Borca's capital of Levkarest stands at the pinnacle of culture and ostentatious power. Here, lesser nobles pursue fickle dramas and vogue trends while the populace labors amid workhouses and cultlike fashion houses. Commoners glimpse this world of toxic glamor only from afar or when nobles exploit street-level fads.

At the city's heart rises the People's Parliament, the land's ineffective seat of government. Here, unpopular members of noble families squabble over meaningless legislation. The nation's true rulers conduct business on noble estates, in avant-garde clubs, and in the offices of faceless mercantile ventures.

Near the People's Parliament stands the Great Cathedral. Within, pious commoners and ostentatious aristocrats attend ceremonies sacred to the deity Ezra. Locals say the cathedral was created by nobles who believed they'd earned the ire of some great evil. Centuries later, these families still support the church, transactionally investing in dubious supernatural insurance.

Map 2.3: Borca

Damien Mammoliti

Player Version

Damien Mammoliti

Borca Locations

Location	Description
Alichino's Hall	No one knows who built the cursed mansion of Alichino's Hall, but tales claim that devils gather here nightly to gamble. Allegedly anyone who bests the cheating devils is granted a wish.
House of Lament	The abandoned House of Lament abuts the tower of a ruined castle. Numerous spirits haunt this accursed place, which has been known to appear in the Mists and in other domains.
Lechberg	The residents of Lechberg pretend not to notice that many of their neighbors are clockwork creations of Ivan Dilisnya, fearing their unpredictable lord's reprisal if they don't play along.

Location	Description
Leoni	Owned by the Ocrotire family, Leoni has a baseless reputation for harboring bandits. Zealous circuit judges from Sturben often visit and arrest those they deem suspicious.
New Ilvin	After Ilvin burned, the residents rebuilt their homes to the east. The people of New Ilvin never speak of the tragedy that befell them and constructed a new road to avoid Old Ilvin.
Noble estates	The homes of Borca's most influential families are detailed in "Nobles of Borca."
Old Ilvin	Only ruins remain of the town of Ilvin. Hidden within sealed cellars lie the charred remains of many who now appear to reside in the town of New Ilvin.
Poison Orchard	Poisonous fungi and plants grow in the Poison Orchard—the deadliest grow at the forest's heart. Several noble-backed companies use these plants as secret ingredients in their products.
Scholomance	Scions of Borca's noble families viciously compete to attend the elite Scholomance school of magic. The school is home to the Rainmaker Society, which is said to control Borcan politics.
Sturben	Sturben is home to the Faceless Court, in which groups of five masked judges execute severe justice across social classes. Their iron-masked circuit judges travel widely.
Vor Ziyden	A hound-like horror appears nightly to terrorize the village of Vor Ziyden. Only one local knows the monster seeks the corpse of its brother, who died near a druidic site in the nearby woods.

Ivana Boritsi

Darklord of Poisonous Ambition

WeirdUndead (Karina Refrynn)

"Your kind can't possibly fathom how much this sort of interruption costs the House of Boritsi. Don't make it worse by being tedious."

— Ivana Boritsi

Ivana Boritsi tires of playing games no one realizes she's already won. The head of Borca's most influential family, Ivana effortlessly manipulates all aspects of society. Her servants, employees, and fractious cousins prove endlessly unreliable, forcing her to attend personally to tedious duties and social functions to maintain her power.

Ivana looks eternally youthful, causing some to doubt her competence and attribute her success to her elder cousin, Ivan Dilisnya. Perpetually bored with and disappointed by predictable people, she takes refuge in her alchemical studies and her gardens of poisonous plants. Her vast knowledge of toxins makes her a peerless poisoner. She uses her creations to make people more pliable and to assassinate those she deems too boorish to live. Secretly, Ivana seeks someone who can match her intellect and relieve her boredom, but she quickly grows weary of even the most charming and clever souls.

Ivana's Tale

The firstborn of a fantastically wealthy family, Ivana Boritsi was clever, poised, and—in the eyes of her father, Klaus—utterly unfit to lead the family. Driven to prove her father wrong and encouraged by her mother, Camille, Ivana learned every aspect of her family's vast perfume and medicine business.

Her focus on her goals faltered when she met Pieter, a skilled chemist in her family's service. Camille recognized her daughter's budding romance and saw the lowborn Pieter as a threat to the girl's prospects. Camille seduced Pieter and arranged for her daughter to discover them, intent on convincing her to forsake this and all future romances.

Ivana took a different lesson from the experience. Realizing the depths of her family's depravity, she poisoned her mother and her callous younger siblings with toxins of her own design. None suspected Ivana, but soon after, Klaus summoned her. Having lost his sons, Klaus named her cousin, Ivan Dilisnya, his heir. Ivana was the last to be informed, her father having already announced his decision to the estate and sent a messenger to inform the Dilisnyas.

Having expected this, Ivana had poisoned the perfumery on the estate's grounds, turning its far-ranging smells deadly. Ivana laughed as toxic mist poured across the estate. As she sipped the antidote, she watched Klaus and the manor's staff die choking amid a violet fog. When the poison cleared, the Mists had surrounded the land of Borca (for details on Ivana's domain and lair, see "Ivan Dilisnya").

Ivana Boritsi

RHW p52

Medium Humanoid (Human), Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
17	+9 (19)	104 (16d8 + 32)	30 ft.	5 (XP 1,800, or 2,300 in lair; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	17	+3	+6	**Con**	14	+2	+5
Int	18	+4	+4	**Wis**	15	+2	+2	**Cha**	14	+2	+2

Skills Deception +8, Nature +7, Perception +5

Imm. Poison; Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Ivana dies, she revives with all her Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Borca.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day, or 3/Day in Domain). If Ivana fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Ivana makes two Toxic Touch attacks.

Toxic Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Poison damage. A Humanoid reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage rises 24 hours later as a Vine Blight under Ivana's control unless the Humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

Stifling Perfume (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from Ivana. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Poison damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Charm (Recharge 5–6). Ivana casts Charm Person, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15), and the duration is 24 hours.

Tree Stride. If within 5 feet of a Large or bigger inanimate plant, Ivana teleports to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of a second Large or bigger inanimate plant that is within 60 feet of the previous plant.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 2. Immediately after another creature's turn, Ivana can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Ivana regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Retaliate. Ivana makes one Toxic Touch attack.

Toxin Wave. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 15-foot Cone. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. While Poisoned, the target subtracts 1d6 from its damage rolls. *Failure or Success:* Ivana can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Regional Effects

Borca is altered by Ivana's and Ivan's presences, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in their domain, Ivana or Ivan can close or open the borders to Borca at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Borca are filled with briar vines (Ivana) or barbed wire (Ivan). The Mists become Difficult Terrain, and whenever a creature moves into or within the Mists, it takes 2d4 Piercing damage for every 5 feet it travels. Once Ivana or Ivan closes or opens the borders, neither Darklord can do so again until the next dawn.

Ivana's Whispers (Ivana Only). Ivana can encode a message of 25 words or fewer into flowers in Borca at dawn. Until the next dawn, the first time a creature smells a flower, it hears the message in its mind, understanding the meaning of the message.

Mystery Letters (Ivan Only). Whenever Ivan writes a letter and addresses it to a creature in Borca whose name he knows and that he's seen before, the letter appears near that creature at the next dawn. The letter appears in an unobserved but obvious space, such as a bedside table or among gear.

Spies. While in Borca, Ivana and Ivan can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no Material components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. To cast the spell, there must be a Large or bigger plant (Ivana) or a Tiny doll or similar toy (Ivan) within range from which the sensor appears.

If a Darklord of Borca dies, that Darklord's effects end immediately. Those effects resume if that Darklord gains a new body (see Ivana's and Ivan's Darklord Restoration traits).

Ivan Dilisnya

Darklord of Childish Cruelty

WeirdUndead (Karina Refrynn)

"*Oh ho oh! What succulent insipidity I see in those lumpish eyes! What divine folly! I swoon, I croon, I know! You'll be a new favorite!*"

— Ivan Dilisnya

Ivan Dilisnya—a spoiled, selfish attention seeker—has the tastes of a child but a withered wreck of a body. Borcan society widely regards this recluse as an innovator and a genius. In truth, he is neither. Ivan is a wicked and off-putting manipulator who, despite his appearance and intellect, affects childlike behaviors and speech patterns for attention. He is alone—despite having been born with everything—and the solitude terrifies him.

By staying out of sight or using deceptive correspondence, Ivan makes his targets doubt reality and overestimate his control. He manipulates people into performing pointless errands for him or spying on his cousin, Ivana Boritsi, whom he believes mocks him and has caused his aged, squalid state.

Ivan surrounds himself with dangerous clockwork toys and fawning, mechanical servants. While he goes through the motions of crafting such devices, the Dark Powers provide him with any creation he desires, no matter how bizarre.

Ivan's Tale

Treachery is tradition for the Dilisnya family. The land of Borca originates from the same world as Barovia's conquerors, the von Zaroviches. Dilisnyas were at Castle Ravenloft the night of Strahd von Zarovich's transformation.

Ages later, the siblings Boris and Camille Dilisnya plotted to steal the prestige of their cousins, the Boritsis. Camille manipulated her way into the Boritsi family, while Boris prepared his son, Ivan, to act as head of a united Boritsi–Dilisnya house.

Despite abundant opportunities, Ivan resented his family's plans for him and grew to embody puerile vice and impulses. His family's wealth and doting servants exacerbated this problem, even as Ivan fixated on childish toys and behaviors. Frequent "accidents" transpired around him, forcing his family to cover up the maimings and deaths of numerous pets and servants. Only his beloved sister, Kristina, remained immune to his wicked tricks. Although Ivan's family grew unsettled by Ivan, they sheltered the future head of their house, reshaping their estate and investing in whimsical diversions for him.

On the same night Ivana Boritsi poisoned her family, Ivan learned his parents intended to send Kristina to a prestigious boarding school. Screams, cruel cackling, and clockwork screeching filled the estate that night. When it ended, Ivan Dilisnya was the last living member of his family, and the Mists had closed around Borca.

Ivan Dilisnya

RHW p54

Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+8 (18)	90 (12d8 + 36)	40 ft., Climb 40 ft.	5 (XP 1,800, or 2,300 in lair; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	14	+2	+5	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	19	+4	+4	**Wis**	12	+1	+4	**Cha**	15	+2	+2

Skills History +7, Investigation +7, Perception +7

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Ivan dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Borca.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day, or 3/Day in Domain). If Ivan fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Ivan makes two Foreleg attacks. He can replace one attack with a use of Deadly Contraption.

Foreleg. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Piercing damage.

Deadly Contraption. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature Ivan can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Slashing damage. *Failure or Success:* A flailing clockwork contraption attaches to the target until the start of Ivan's next turn. If the target willingly moves 5 feet or more before then, the target takes 4 (1d8) Slashing damage.

At the start of Ivan's next turn, the device crumbles to dust and vanishes.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 2. Immediately after another creature's turn, Ivan can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Ivan regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Retaliate. Ivan makes one Foreleg attack.

Trapped Ground. Ivan spreads special caltrops to cover a 20-foot-square area within 5 feet of himself. The caltrops dissolve at the end of Ivan's next turn. Ivan can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

When the caltrops appear, each creature in the area is subjected to the following effect; a creature that enters the caltrops for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there is also subjected to this effect. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15 (a creature makes this save only once per turn). *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Piercing damage, and its Speed is reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Regional Effects

Borca is altered by Ivana's and Ivan's presences, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in their domain, Ivana or Ivan can close or open the borders to Borca at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Borca are filled with briar vines (Ivana) or barbed wire (Ivan). The Mists become Difficult Terrain, and whenever a creature moves into or within the Mists, it takes 2d4 Piercing damage for every 5 feet it travels. Once Ivana or Ivan closes or opens the borders, neither Darklord can do so again until the next dawn.

Ivana's Whispers (Ivana Only). Ivana can encode a message of 25 words or fewer into flowers in Borca at dawn. Until the next dawn, the first time a creature smells a flower, it hears the message in its mind, understanding the meaning of the message.

Mystery Letters (Ivan Only). Whenever Ivan writes a letter and addresses it to a creature in Borca whose name he knows and that he's seen before, the letter appears near that creature at the next dawn. The letter appears in an unobserved but obvious space, such as a bedside table or among gear.

Spies. While in Borca, Ivana and Ivan can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no Material components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. To cast the spell, there must be a Large or bigger plant (Ivana) or a Tiny doll or similar toy (Ivan) within range from which the sensor appears.

If a Darklord of Borca dies, that Darklord's effects end immediately. Those effects resume if that Darklord gains a new body (see Ivana's and Ivan's Darklord Restoration traits).

Ivana and Ivan's Domain

Borca is altered by Ivana's and Ivan's presences, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in their domain, Ivana or Ivan can close or open the borders to Borca at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Borca are filled with briar vines (Ivana) or barbed wire (Ivan). The Mists become Difficult Terrain, and whenever a creature moves into or within the Mists, it takes 2d4 Piercing damage for every 5 feet it travels. Once Ivana or Ivan closes or opens the borders, neither Darklord can do so again until the next dawn.

Ivana's Whispers (Ivana Only). Ivana can encode a message of 25 words or fewer into flowers in Borca at dawn. Until the next dawn, the first time a creature smells a flower, it hears the message in its mind, understanding the meaning of the message.

Mystery Letters (Ivan Only). Whenever Ivan writes a letter and addresses it to a creature in Borca whose name he knows and that he's seen before, the letter appears near that creature at the next dawn. The letter appears in an unobserved but obvious space, such as a bedside table or among gear.

Spies. While in Borca, Ivana and Ivan can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no Material components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. To cast the spell, there must be a Large or bigger plant (Ivana) or a Tiny doll or similar toy (Ivan) within range from which the sensor appears.

If a Darklord of Borca dies, that Darklord's effects end immediately. Those effects resume if that Darklord gains a new body (see Ivana's and Ivan's Darklord Restoration traits).

Ivana's Lair

The vast Boritsi estate, Misericordia, hosts fields, greenhouses, and alchemy labs used to create Boritsi-branded perfumes and tinctures. Within the manor, the Darklord cultivates rare and unique plants in greenhouse-like conservatory wings only she can enter.

Misericordia Conservatories

The conservatories of Misericordia, the Boritsi estate, hold strange plants, many of which Ivana cultivated. One such site is depicted on map 2.4 and has the following features:

Gardens. Plants of exceptional beauty and toxicity flourish under Ivana's care in Misericordia's gardens and greenhouses. Many require unusual fertilizers to flourish—particularly the carnivorous plants.

Laboratory. In her lab, the Darklord brews deadly alchemical concoctions and wondrous perfumes. A sizable perfume organ here is filled with rare scents and lethal poisons.

Nursery. Hidden behind a rotating wall is Ivana's private nursery and study. Here she cultivates new plant species, many of which have supernatural properties or monstrous life.

Map 2.4: Misericordia Greenhouse

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Ivan's Lair

The Dilisnya estate, Degravo, is a confusing tangle of topiary gardens, hedge mazes, and neglected petting zoos that abut sheer cliffs. At the heart of the grounds sits a largely abandoned compound that includes the Laughing House, Ivan's home.

The Laughing House

The only occupied structure in Degravo, the Laughing House has been renovated and redecorated to suit a child's whimsical tastes. The site is depicted on map 2.4 and has the following features:

Ivan's Playroom. On the second floor of the manor, a gallery of childish art leads to doors minded by a clockwork attendant that Ivan can taunt intruders through. At the hall's end is a fake bedroom decorated for a neglected youngster. A hidden door there leads to Ivan's true personal chambers. This playroom is a wonderland of ingenious toys, all of which are secretly deadly. Beyond the Darklord's personal chamber lie secret rooms where he creates new playthings and discards toys he's grown tired of.

Playhouse. Beyond a lobby attended by clockwork staff, a theater hosts brutal stage productions for Ivan's amusement. Performers might be life-size toys or desperate prisoners.

Map 2.4: Degravo Laughing House

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Adventures in Borca

Adventures set in Borca involve intrigue between petty nobles, family secrets, manipulation, and deception. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

At Misericordia, the Boritsi family estate, Ivana Boritsi indulges her research into rare and deadly plants

Maihope

Horror in Borca

Adventures in Borca often include the following elements.

Nobles of Borca

Twelve depraved families rule over every aspect of life in Borca. Each is a core family of fifteen or fewer irredeemable individuals united around the head of the house, who tyrannically controls the clan's myriad ventures. Servants and business representatives across the domain support these core families, as do members of branch families—lackeys with different surnames who are distantly related to the core family or indentured to them.

The Noble Families of Borca table details the domain's most powerful families.

Noble Families of Borca

Name	Estate Name	Concern
Boritsi	Misericordia	Beauty and medical tonics, perfume
Dilisnya	Degravo	Agriculture
Eris	Coairdeiador	Art, theater

Name	Estate Name	Concern
Ivliskova	Abreptoro	Education, orphanages
Nobriskov	Cubratdis	Religion
Nuikin	Esecklae	Academia, athletics
Ocrotire	Sanctesalat	Fishing, woodwork
Olzanik	Kinisaradia	Metalwork
Piechota	Alieselti	Ranching
Pretorius	Mundorhova	Gambling
Ritter	Vetistiqua	Fashion
Tatenna	Fulchighora	Banking

Supernatural Intrigue

Magic and the supernatural heighten the gilded depravities of Borca. When planning adventures in Borca, consider including the following elements.

Curses and Poison. Chapter 3 of the Dungeon Master's Guide describes curses, magical contagions, and poison. Villains in Borca might use these or adjusted versions of your own design—perhaps with signature cosmetic effects.

Monsters. Monsters can serve as threats but also agents of noble houses. Shape-shifting creatures such as Imps and Wererats excel at infiltration, while Doppelgangers and Succubi might pose as nobles, innocents, or trusted allies. Creatures like Ghosts and Intellect Devourers might control individuals, making them behave in unusual ways. Choose a single monster, and consider how you might make it central to a devious noble's plot.

Spells and Magic Items. Don't try to account for or incorporate all magic into adventures involving supernatural intrigue. Choose a single spell—such as Clairvoyance, Geas, or Speak with Dead—and consider how to make it central to a plot involving secrets and mysterious revelations. Consider doing the same with a magic item such as a Cloak of the Bat, a Hag Eye, or Sending Stones. Characters should earn rewards for using their own magic in clever ways.

Borca Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Borca typically involve the domain's noble families. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–3. A scheming noble targets the characters, presenting them with an opportunity or exorbitant compensation for a simple task. In the aftermath, the characters discover they have given up something of great value or realize they look like criminals.

Levels 4–6. The scheming noble or a rival offers the characters a way out of their predicament, but this involves a dangerous confrontation or daring infiltration. Supernatural forces—such as jilted doppelgangers, cursed family members, or dead nobility—might aid the characters. Against expectations, the characters complete their mission and turn the tables on their foe.

Levels 7–8. The characters' activities attract the attention of Ivana Boritsi or Ivan Dilisnya. The Darklord invites the characters to their estate or corresponds with them from afar, using them as agents in their rivalry. For example, either Darklord might task the characters with seeking out the missing will of Ivana's father, Klaus.

Lethal Lavender

Adventure for Level 5 Characters

Situation. The human siblings Eroso and Siobhan Manduchi (Medium, Neutral Evil Nobles) are scions of a minor noble family who stole a rare plant, not realizing it belonged to the Boritsis. After discovering the owner, they feign their deaths to avoid reprisal.

Hook. Eroso and Siobhan seek out the characters to use as patsies in their staged murder.

Encounters

The adventure consists of these encounters.

Dig Your Vibe. Eroso and Siobhan Manduchi approach the characters and invite them to go carousing if the adventurers agree to share tales of their exploits. The two are Friendly and flattering.

Exquisite Corpse. Soon after the characters leave the siblings, they hear a scream. If they investigate, they find Eroso's stabbed corpse surrounded by guards. Siobhan accuses the characters of killing her brother. A group of four Guards and one Guard Captain (in the Manduchis' employ) moves to kill the characters, while Siobhan vanishes into the night.

Wanted. More guards hunt for the characters but are easy to avoid. Before the characters flee the community, Nostalia Romaine (Medium, Lawful Evil Assassin), who appears to be human, discovers them. She explains that she works for the Boritsi family, shares the details in "Situation" above, and insists the characters help her find the Manduchis.

Dead Walking. Any character who spends a day searching for the Manduchis and succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) or Charisma (Persuasion) check learns Eroso's or Siobhan's whereabouts. If they investigate, they find a public site—like a theater or bar—where the noble is behaving recklessly. These aren't the actual Manduchis, but Waxworks (see chapter 5) striving to destroy themselves in public. The characters encounter at least two of these creatures, perhaps more at your discretion.

Flawed Perfection. After the characters encounter at least two self-destructive Manduchi waxworks, they find a **Waxwork** convinced that it is the new, improved Eroso Manduchi, and it doesn't want to die. If the characters promise to let it go, the Construct leads them to Lethal Lavender, the secret club where the Manduchis are hiding.

Lethal Lavender. The interior of the Lethal Lavender club is overgrown with bruise-colored fungus. A pair of fungus-covered Zombie Plague Spreaders haunts the bar. In the VIP lounge, the plant the Manduchis stole has bloomed into a Violet Fungus Necrohulk composed of the real Manduchis and their remaining wax duplicates.

Ivana's Favor. After the monster's defeat, Nostalia finds the characters. She rewards them with a vial of Boritsi perfume worth 2,000 GP and a letter from Ivana Boritsi inviting them to a private social event at Misericordia in a week's time. Each character also earns a bonus 1,100 XP.

Darkon

Domain on the Brink of Destruction

Darklord: None

Genres: Dark fantasy and disaster horror

Hallmarks: Fractured realm, magical ruins, ongoing supernatural catastrophe

Mist Talismans: Ashes of a corpse, coin stamped with Azalin Rex's face, tainted spring water

Aligned Tarokka Card: Necromancer

Opposed Tarokka Card: Donjon

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Darkon is a sprawling realm of somber gothic cities, vast wildernesses, hidden secrets, and the dead. The ruins of forgotten magical empires scar the land. Undead creatures haunt the domain's lonely reaches, and the living acknowledge that the land's morbid magic might one day reanimate their corpses.

Yet, for all its mysteries, the domain of Darkon has failed. Across the realm, the Mists close in, inexorably overwhelming the land. These Mists turned ravenous are known as the Shroud, and what they consume doesn't reemerge.

Darkon's dissolution ties to the disappearance of its Darklord, Azalin Rex. During a disastrous event known as the Hour of Ascension, Azalin's citadel, Castle Avernus, was destroyed, and a mysterious golden star called the King's Tear appeared in the heavens. Since then, no one has seen Azalin, and the Shroud has eroded the domain.

Despite the encroaching annihilation, life in Darkon hasn't changed. The residents of towns and cities far from the domain's borders dismiss reports of vanishing frontiers as fearmongering. As Darkon splits into crumbling islands, ambitious individuals vie for Azalin's power, each touting that they alone can save the land by becoming its tyrant.

Domain Features

Darkon is known for the following features:

Divided Domain. The Mists consuming Darkon have divided the land into four separate regions.

Hour of Ascension. Azalin Rex vanished during an event his servants call the Hour of Ascension.

Inevitable Undeath. The night after any Humanoid dies, its corpse reanimates and shambles into the night. Locals swiftly burn bodies to prevent this.

King's Tear. Since the Hour of Ascension, a golden star called the King's Tear hangs in the sky. The sun and moon pass behind this star in their orbits.

Secret Police. The Kargat, the domain's secret police, remains active in Darkon's largest cities: Il Aluk and Martira Bay.

Locations in Darkon

Darkon is a place of dark wonders and apathy. The ruins of impossible structures litter the landscape, but the domain's jaded people ignore these marvels to focus on daily concerns.

The regions of Darkon are described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Darkon Locations table.

Regions of Darkon

The Shroud has divided Darkon into four parts (see "Fractures of Darkon" for details):

Jagged Coast. Dense forests and shattered cliffs compose the Jagged Coast, skirting the Sea of Souls. Undead within the forests prey on isolated communities here.

Lychgate. Lychgate is ruled by the dead. Aimless undead creatures wander the forest, milling around amid the time-locked ruins of Castle Avernus and many of Azalin's powerful servants.

Mistlands. Scattered communities dot the Mistlands, which were once Darkon's wild eastern reaches. Strange monsters emerge from the forests and mountains to prey on the isolated lands.

Rexcrown. The heart of Darkon, Rexcrown has become a sagging bog. From it rise the spires and grim wonders of Il Aluk, Darkon's capital, and the homes of the domain's indifferent elite.

Map 2.5: Darkon

Damien Mammoliti

Player Version

Damien Mammoliti

Darkon Locations

Location	Description
Brautslava Institute	The Brautslava Institute hosts scholars of varied fields, from science and the arts to pseudoscience and fringe supernaturalism. The college of ethics is woefully underfunded.
Castle Avernus	The castle of Azalin Rex was known as a place of grim justice and mysterious magic. Now it stands locked in time, frozen in a moment of magical catastrophe.
Engel's End	Most of Engel's End's residents have fled the Shroud, but a golden light shines from the belfry of the hamlet's chapel. Since its lighting, the Mists haven't encroached closer.
Il Aluk	With supplies dwindling, Darkon's capital of Il Aluk is in disorder. The elite cling to lies of prosperity as they starve and steal from the populace. Riots and assassinations occur daily.
Karg	The small city of Karg is half-consumed by the Shroud. When residents began fleeing, the Kargat sealed the gates to prevent others from succumbing to "mass hysteria" and leaving.
Martira Bay	A city of fog and mysteries, Martira Bay is home to infamous serial killers and renowned detectives. Its busy port receives traders from other domains and even stranger lands.
Nartok	The town of Nartok keeps a strict curfew, barring its gates at dusk to keep out the forest's undead. Many locals once served at Castle Avernus, which used to be visible in the distance.

Location	Description
Neblus	Built amid the trees, Neblus's oldest structures are home to wealthy crime families. These criminals extort the locals and suppress their naturalistic traditions.
Nevuchar Springs	Nevuchar Springs' hot springs have miraculous properties, but some bathers emerge with different personalities. The mystics of the Eternal Order research and protect the springs.
Rivalis	The fishing town of Rivalis embraces its quaintness and avoids speaking of the monsters lurking in the nearby lakes. The untended estates of old, wealthy families lie outside town.
Vradlock	Vradlock's dragonborn, drow, and goliath citizens claim descent from the spirits of Mount Nyid. Since the Shroud cut off the town, the mountain experiences frequent quakes.
Watchers' Stronghold	Within the vault-like Watcher's Stronghold, monastic members of the Order of the Guardians (see chapter 3) contain and protect cursed or dangerous magical oddities.

Azalin Rex

Darklord Who Won't Be Caged

Guilherme Motta

"*It is customary to kneel before your dread lord.*"

— Azalin Rex

In Darkon, Azalin was a tyrannical wizard-king obeyed by the living and the dead. When he first appeared before his people, he adopted an illusion of the form he possessed in life: that of a middle-aged human man with dark hair and a superior demeanor. However, his true form was that of a moldering lich, eyes ablaze with blasphemous energy.

Since arriving in the Domains of Dread, Azalin has been unable to learn new magic. For a wizard who forsook his mortality to pursue arcane studies, this was the ultimate frustration. Despite the limits on his studies, Azalin numbered among the few Darklords who understood the mysterious nature of the Domains of Dread. For generations, Azalin struggled to escape Darkon. His magical atrocities reshaped Darkon and the Domains of Dread time and again. However, these struggles gave Azalin only a glimpse of freedom, and his metaphysical violations inevitably reverted to the Dark Powers' original designs. Nevertheless, Azalin refused to stay a prisoner. His most recent plot culminated in the Hour of Ascension and the destruction of Castle Avernus. Since then, no one in Darkon has seen the Darklord, and his realm has begun deteriorating.

The stat block in this section presents the Darklord as he was prior to his disappearance and how he would be should he return. Azalin's current spirit jar is a golden amulet he carries. If this amulet is destroyed, Azalin's original spirit jar—an immovable dragon skull in the ruins of Castle Avernus—reactivates, and the lich's spirit returns to Darkon if his body is destroyed.

Azalin Rex

RHW p62

Medium Undead (Wizard), Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
20	+17 (27)	390 (52d8 + 156)	30 ft.	23 (XP 50,000, or 62,000 in lair; PB +7)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	11	+0	+0	**Dex**	16	+3	+10	**Con**	16	+3	+10
Int	21	+5	+12	**Wis**	17	+3	+10	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Skills Arcana +19, History +12, Insight +10, Perception +10

Res. Cold, Lightning

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 20

Languages All

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Azalin dies and his spirit jar remains intact, he revives with all his Hit Points in 2d10 days in the unoccupied space nearest his spirit jar. If Azalin's spirit jar is destroyed, he instead revives in 4d10 days in Castle Avernus in Darkon.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Domain). If Azalin fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Azalin makes three attacks, using Eldritch Burst or Paralyzing Touch in any combination.

Eldritch Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) Force damage.

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) Cold damage, and the target has the Paralyzed condition until the start of Azalin's next turn.

Spellcasting. Azalin casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20):

At will: Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Dispel Magic, Invisibility, Lightning Bolt (level 5 version), Mage Hand, Prestidigitation

2/day each: Animate Dead, Dimension Door, Modify Memory, Plane Shift, Scrying

1/day each: Chain Lightning, Finger of Death, Power Word Kill

Reactions

Siphon Spell. Azalin casts Counterspell in response to the spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. If the target creature fails its saving throw against this Counterspell, Azalin steals knowledge of the triggering spell. For 1 hour or until Azalin takes this Reaction again, Azalin can cast that spell once, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Azalin can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Azalin regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Eldritch Teleport. Azalin teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see and makes one Eldritch Burst or Paralyzing Touch attack.

Forbidden Knowledge. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 20, up to three creatures Azalin can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of Azalin's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* Azalin can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Azalin Rex

RHW p62

Medium Undead (Wizard), Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
20	+17 (27)	390 (52d8 + 156)	30 ft.	23 (XP 50,000, or 62,000 in lair; PB +7)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	11	+0	+0	**Dex**	16	+3	+10	**Con**	16	+3	+10
Int	21	+5	+12	**Wis**	17	+3	+10	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Skills Arcana +19, History +12, Insight +10, Perception +10

Res. Cold, Lightning

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 20

Languages All

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Azalin dies and his spirit jar remains intact, he revives with all his Hit Points in 2d10 days in the unoccupied space nearest his spirit jar. If Azalin's spirit jar is destroyed, he instead revives in 4d10 days in Castle Avernus in Darkon.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Domain). If Azalin fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Azalin makes three attacks, using Eldritch Burst or Paralyzing Touch in any combination.

Eldritch Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) Force damage.

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) Cold damage, and the target has the Paralyzed condition until the start of Azalin's next turn.

Spellcasting. Azalin casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20):

At will: Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Dispel Magic, Invisibility, Lightning Bolt (level 5 version), Mage Hand, Prestidigitation

2/day each: Animate Dead, Dimension Door, Modify Memory, Plane Shift, Scrying

1/day each: Chain Lightning, Finger of Death, Power Word Kill

Reactions

Siphon Spell. Azalin casts Counterspell in response to the spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. If the target creature fails its saving throw against this Counterspell, Azalin steals knowledge of the triggering spell. For 1 hour or until Azalin takes this Reaction again, Azalin can cast that spell once, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Azalin can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Azalin regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Eldritch Teleport. Azalin teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see and makes one Eldritch Burst or Paralyzing Touch attack.

Forbidden Knowledge. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 20, up to three creatures Azalin can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of Azalin's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* Azalin can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Regional Effects

Darkon is altered by Azalin's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Azalin can close or open the borders to Darkon at will. While the borders are closed, undead terrors fill the Mists surrounding Darkon. Whenever a creature enters the Mists, one Hostile Zombie Clot appears in a random unoccupied space within 30 feet of that creature.

Lord of the Dead. While in his domain, Azalin can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as his Spellcasting action. When Azalin casts this spell in this way, he can place the sensor in any Undead in Darkon with an Intelligence of 6 or less, even if it is beyond 1 mile of Azalin. In addition, Azalin can speak through the Undead he placed the sensor in.

No Secrets. Whenever a creature in Darkon casts a spell using a level 5+ spell slot, Azalin becomes aware of that creature's name and location. A Nondetection spell blocks this effect.

If Azalin dies, these effects end immediately.

Azalin's Tale

Firan Zal'honan was a noble and heir to the city-state of Knurl on the world of Oerth. A student of magic, Firan adopted the title "Azal'Lan," meaning "wizard-king," when he came to power. Firan's rule was marked by harsh laws and violent expansion, but his people flourished, as their lives were filled with magical wonders.

As Firan aged, he looked toward his succession. His son, Irik, was generous and charming but, in Firan's eyes, soft and unfit to rule. No matter how Firan tried to teach his son of the world's harsh realities, Irik's kind spirit wouldn't bend to his father's cynical outlook. This difference came to a head when Firan caught Irik freeing political prisoners. Firan could have ignored the crime or pardoned his son. Instead, Firan personally wielded the axe during Irik's execution.

In the years that followed, Firan was tormented by his son's death, but he also became convinced that only he was fit to rule. Researching the mysteries of death, he discovered the secret to becoming a lich. After embracing the transition into undeath, Firan ruled for decades more, increasing Knurl's power and earning himself many foes. Eventually, tales of magic that might restore Irik lured Firan from his home. During his search, a band of mercenaries ambushed the ruler. Firan fled into the mist to avoid the assassins. When the mist cleared, Firan found himself in Barovia.

In Barovia, peasants Firan encountered mistook his title and called him Azalin. Soon, Azalin encountered Barovia's ruler, Strahd von Zarovich. The two came to respect each other, and Azalin taught Strahd much of the way of magic. Together, the pair learned a great deal about the nature of the Domains of Dread and made attempts to escape. Their plots failed, though, and resulted in other realms—such as the domain of Mordent—being drawn into Barovia's orbit. Eventually, the two tyrants' respect soured into loathing. Before Azalin and Strahd could destroy each other, Azalin entered the Mists, and the domain of Darkon spread before him.

Azalin's Domain

Darkon is altered by Azalin's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Azalin can close or open the borders to Darkon at will. While the borders are closed, undead terrors fill the Mists surrounding Darkon. Whenever a creature enters the Mists, one Hostile Zombie Clot appears in a random unoccupied space within 30 feet of that creature.

Lord of the Dead. While in his domain, Azalin can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as his Spellcasting action. When Azalin casts this spell in this way, he can place the sensor in any Undead in Darkon with an Intelligence of 6 or less, even if it is beyond 1 mile of Azalin. In addition, Azalin can speak through the Undead he placed the sensor in.

No Secrets. Whenever a creature in Darkon casts a spell using a level 5+ spell slot, Azalin becomes aware of that creature's name and location. A Nondetection spell blocks this effect.

If Azalin dies, these effects end immediately.

Azalin's Lair

During the Hour of Ascension, Castle Avernus—Azalin's seat of rule and magical laboratory—erupted in a magical conflagration. Now, Castle Avernus stands frozen in time at the instant of its destruction, blasted to magically floating chunks of rubble. Its towers pitch wildly and crumble to pieces amid arcane flames, yet they don't fall. Although time has halted in the ruins, Azalin's servants who avoided the disaster have returned, unaffected by the castle's frozen time. Meanwhile, the fortress's magic attempts to heal the wreckage, slowly creating new halls and winding stairs between the fractured floors.

Castle Avernus

Amid its magical destruction, Castle Avernus is a vast structure filled with Azalin's arcane creations and summoned servants. Prominent locations from this ruin are depicted on map 2.7 and detailed here:

Outer Bailey and Gallery. The castle's entry, called the Maw by Azalin's servants, remains partially intact. Undead from the surrounding wilds lurk here, waiting for their lord's commands.

Hall of Records. A column of stationary but still deadly magical fire blasts through Avernus's library. Scattered on ruined islands of rubble are the remains of a collection said to hold the biographies of all who have died in Darkon.

Tomb of Irik Zal'honan. Here stands the tomb of Azalin's son, Irik. The Ghost of Irik appears to those with benevolent intentions. Despite his tragic fate, he forgives his father—but he doesn't want Azalin to harm anyone else. He can't leave the crypt and knows little of Azalin's plots.

Lair of Ebbasheyth. The Shadow Dragon Ebbasheyth served as Azalin's adviser and steed. While she has moved much of her hoard to Mount Nyid, she still watches over the treasures here.

Hall of Life. The Hall of Life has largely crumbled and is accessible only via gaps in the ceiling of the floor below. Within survives a circle of glass and emerald cylinders. These hold the remains of Azalin's magical cloning experiments. A gigantic dragon skull made of gold has fallen into the midst of these failed experiments. This is Azalin's original spirit jar, but the skull's eyes, which once glowed with unholy flames, now look empty.

Heart of Avernus. Amid the tower's wreckage glows the magical anomaly called the Heart of Avernus. This is the epicenter of the disaster that destroyed the castle during the Hour of Ascension. This mysterious force draws droves of the undead to feed on the ongoing magical reaction.

Fractures of Darkon

The domain of Darkon has fractured into four regions: the Jagged Coast, Lychgate, the Mistlands, and Rexcrown. In Azalin's absence, ambitious villains unleash terrors as they strive to dominate their piece of the domain. This section explores the horrors unfolding in each region of Darkon.

Jagged Coast

Stark vistas of sheer cliffs, mysterious islands, and knotted forests bleed from one to the next along the Jagged Coast. The shadow of Castle Avernus once loomed over the southern part of the region, enforcing grim peace on the small communities there. In the north, the thriving city of Martira Bay prides itself on its inhabitants' wealth and reason.

Since Azalin's disappearance, the Darklord's secret police have maintained order here—obeying not the commands of the missing king, but rather the will of their regional leader, Alcio Metus.

The Treacherous Harbor of Martira Bay

Titus Lunter

Kargat

Azalin's secret police, the Kargat, has long enforced the Darklord's edicts and smothered any ember of rebellion in Darkon. Those "disappeared" by the Kargat are never seen again.

While all Darkon fears these dark-cloaked spies, few realize the Kargat is largely composed of vampires and other shape-shifting creatures. Members operate in cells assigned to particular tasks or locations, with each reporting to a regional leader. The highest-ranking members reported to Azalin. Serving the Kargat are the Kargatane, a cultlike rank of living informants and initiates who spy on their neighbors in hopes of earning supernatural power and induction into the larger organization.

The Hour of Ascension threw the Kargat into disorder. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Alcio Metus (Medium, Neutral Evil Vampire), a Kargat leader and criminal kingpin in Martira Bay, slew her peers and took over the western branch of the group. From the Black Tower in Martira Bay, Alcio spreads her Kargat spies across region and beyond.

Martira Bay

A foggy port on the Sea of Souls, Martira Bay is a cosmopolitan hub of trade and ideas. The populace prides itself on its worldliness and believes that the best of Darkon and lands beyond passes through the city. Martira Bay's people appreciate reason and tangibility, and many have never left the city. This makes many residents incredulous of magic and the supernatural, even as séances and spiritualist practices flourish in posh salons.

Martira Bay is infamous for sensationalist murders. Newspapers such as *The Bullseye* update their devoted readership on the grisly details of sprees committed by killers such as the Midnight Slasher, the Spider, and the Weeping Woman. The overwhelmed Martira Bay constabulary works to counter these killers, as do professional detective agencies including the Ray Detectives (founded by Alanik Ray; see chapter 3) and the Dusklight Detectives.

Map 2.6: Martira Bay

Jared Blando

Player Version

Jared Blando

Lychgate

Lychgate hides the magically shattered remains of Castle Avernus. Whatever ongoing magical disaster befell the castle during the Hour of Ascension has locked its ruins in time, freezing it in a semi-exploded state. While Castle Avernus remains the lair of some of Azalin's most dangerous servants, the surrounding wilderness has become overrun by shuffling corpses and mournful spirits drawn to the castle's strange magic. The region is ruled by Ebbasheyth, Azalin's Shadow Dragon ally who maintains a lair in Castle Avernus.

Adventures in Lychgate likely relate to the mystery of Azalin's disappearance. Roll on or choose a result from the Doom in Lychgate table to inspire adventures in this ruined realm.

Doom in Lychgate

1d6	In Lychgate, Adventurers Might Seek...
1	Azalin's spirit jar or other magical treasure.
2	The corpse of an ally whose body rose as a zombie and wandered into the Mists.
3	A Darklord's treasure held in Avernus.
4	Details of Azalin's fate.
5	Duplicates of Azalin, an ally, or themselves.
6	A passage to the King's Tear.

Mistlands

Even before the Hour of Ascension, western Darkon was a land of magical mysteries and strange creatures. No longer fearing the Darklord's magic, ancient evils have crept from the shadows to terrorize and control the scattered communities.

In the town of Nevuchar Springs, an elf mystic and leader of the Eternal Order, Cardinna Artazas, works to turn back the Shroud. To do this, she sought to resurrect a being bonded to the land and capable of bending the Mists to its will. This resulted in the corruption of her order's sacred pools and unleashed Darcalus Rex, a Necrichor (see chapter 5) that claims to be the first king of Darkon. Uncertain of what it has unleashed but desperate for salvation, the Eternal Order serves the whims of Darcalus Rex as the strange being grows in power.

Rexcrown

Residents of Rexcrown consider themselves the only true Darkonians due to their proximity to the capital, Il Aluk. Despite that prestige, Rexcrown is covered in deadly swamps, depleted mountains, and fields that produce disturbingly malformed crops.

The city of Il Aluk is built in a bend in the Vuchar River and rises in countless gothic spires. These mark the homes of the city's elite, severe governmental buildings, and temples dedicated to dozens of grim deities. Serving the city are the vassal villages of Decimus, Desolatus, and Despondia, where peasants struggle to feed the city's people and the decadent lifestyles of local nobles.

As the Shroud spreads fear among traders, Il Aluk suffers from shortages in food and other supplies. The city's residents have grown desperate and resentful of the exploitative upper class. This has resulted in violence and the ransacking of wealthy homes. The city's elite have rallied behind one of their eldest members, Lady Talisveri Eris.

Eris is a vain human who uses elaborate fashions and makeup to disguise the fact that her body is permanently imperceptible. Once each moon, she incites her fearful peers to go out at night and commit violence while using her high-priced Potions of Greater Invisibility. These magical attacks and Eris's pompous, detached rhetoric exacerbate tensions in the city while enriching her nearly bankrupt family.

Adventures in Darkon

Adventures set in Darkon's disconnected regions often involve the mystery of Azalin's disappearance, the domain's dissolution, or the metaphysical nature of the Domains of Dread. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Horror in Darkon

Beyond the adventures you might develop in Darkon's disconnected regions, the following elements persist across the domain.

Azalin's Fate

The events of the Hour of Ascension and the fate of Azalin loom over adventures in Darkon. The details of these mysteries are yours to decide. You can take inspiration from the following possibilities when determining Azalin's fate.

Severed Darklord. During the Hour of Ascension, Azalin's body was destroyed as he tore open portals to the Negative and Positive Energy Planes. The former portal lies at the heart of Castle Avernus, while the latter is known as the King's Tear. The opposed planar energies are disrupting Darkon. Once the domain is destroyed, Azalin theorizes, his spirit jar will be released into the Shadowfell.

Shattered Darklord. The Hour of Ascension was Azalin's failed attempt to become one of the Dark Powers. His essence is now trapped within his spirit jar, scattered pieces of his iron crown, and the floating amber sarcophagus known as the King's Tear. Whoever frees Azalin's essence will become the new Darklord.

Unmoored Darklord. During the Hour of Ascension, Azalin split his soul, leaving a piece in Darkon while the greater part escaped through a metaphysical rent between domains—the King's Tear. Now, disguised as the scholar Firan Zal'honan, Azalin searches for secrets of the Dark Powers in other domains. He avoids entering the Mists without Mist-wandering guides, fearing the Dark Powers will find him otherwise.

The Dead Serve

In Darkon, Humanoid corpses reanimate as Zombies 24 hours after death. These corpses obey Azalin. While he remains missing, they roam in a winding path toward Castle Avernus. These zombies avoid other creatures, but they fight anything that blocks their path.

The Shroud

During the day, one can traverse the Mists surrounding Darkon as normal, allowing travel between domains or regions of Darkon. At night, the Mists surrounding the domain turn deadly and encroach on the land—sometimes by infinitesimal degrees, other times in unstoppable floods. A creature that touches the Shroud takes 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage and is Frightened until the end of its next turn. If a creature is slain by the Shroud or enters it entirely, the creature vanishes. What becomes of it is a mystery.

Darkon Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Darkon likely involve the mystery of the Hour of Ascension. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–3. The characters arrive in Darkon near Il Aluk, Martira Bay, or Nevuchar Springs. They soon make an ally among those who oppose the villains rising to replace Azalin: Alcio Metus, Darcalus Rex, or Talisveri Eris. The characters help defend their allies and learn of these villains' methods.

Levels 4–15. The characters confront the region's villain. Rather than fighting the characters, the villain entreats the group to help them establish control over the domain, which they believe will reunite Darkon's regions and end the threat of the Shroud. To do so, they must defeat the domain's other villains or recover the scattered remnants of Azalin's power. The characters work to save Darkon while undermining their wicked patron.

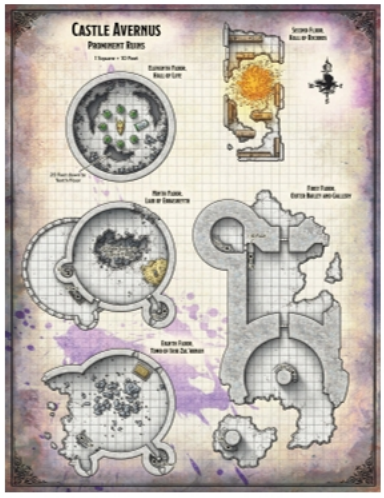
Levels 16–18. The characters' adventures take them to Castle Avernus, where they must either claim a remnant of Azalin's might or learn his fate. In doing so, they can restore Azalin and bring his wrath down on those who would claim his throne.

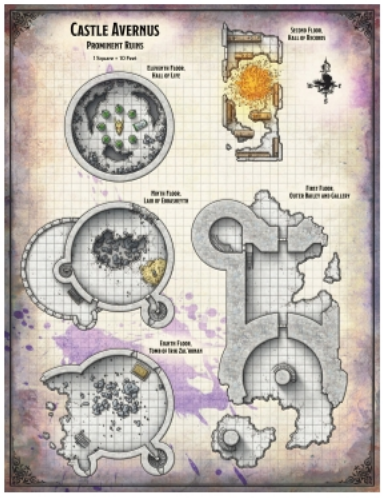
Secrets of Avernus

Adventure for Level 16 Characters

Situation. The characters must learn the secret of Azalin's disappearance.

Hook. The threat of the Shroud and those who would claim Azalin's throne has grown too great to ignore. An ally directs the characters to the only place they can find answers regarding Azalin's disappearance: Castle Avernus.





Map 2.7: Castle Avernus	Player Version
Mike Schley	Mike Schley

Encounters

This adventure uses map 2.7: Castle Avernus. Before starting, consult the "Azalin's Fate" section and develop the details behind the Darklord's disappearance. The floors of Castle Avernus are disconnected, allowing characters to access them in any order.

Lychgate Encounters. While traveling through Lychgate or between floors of Castle Avernus, roll on the following table to determine what the characters encounter.

1d4	Encounter
1	Two scavenging Arcanaloths
2	Two Dullahans (see chapter 5) and two Nightmares
3	Two Haunting Revenants disguised as rubble
4	Two Relentless Juggernauts

Into the Maw. Droves of animate corpses fill the outer bailey. A Spirit Naga named Lossa lurks amid the rubble. If she spots the characters, she impersonates Azalin and commands the corpses to fight. They rise as three Zombie Clots.

The Archive. Elzarath, an Indifferent Ghost with a floating severed head, laments the state of the archives. Elzarath shares that they once held the biographies of all who died in Darkon, but now the books are scattered. If asked about Azalin's biography, the ghost searches and finds nothing. Elzarath doesn't know Azalin's actual name, but if specifically asked about the biography of Firan Zal'honan, the ghost finds the book. This biography relates the information in the "Azalin's Tale" section and key details of the Hour of Ascension.

Crypt of Irik Zal'honan. The Ghost Irik Zal'honan appears to any Good-aligned creature or those who call out to him. Irik can't leave this area, but he aids those who seek to restore his father. He knows Azalin's true name is Firan Zal'honan and shares that with anyone who destroys the corrupted experiment in the Hall of Life in the ruins above. Irik reveals that he is Azalin's son only if asked directly.

Hall of Life. This room holds a dragon skull made of gold and a circle of glass and emerald cylinders. The dragon skull remains magically anchored so only Azalin can move it. The cylinders are cracked and filled with bubbling decay. If someone smashes all the cylinders, the cylinders fuse into a Hostile abomination with the same stat block as a Lesser Star Spawn Emissary.

Ebbasheyth's Lair. Ebbasheyth the Shadow Dragon is in her lair, attended by a Kargat messenger (Medium Vampire Nightbringer). The monsters are Hostile, but any character who takes an Influence action and succeeds on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check can make them Indifferent. Characters who mention their desire to restore Azalin have Advantage on this check. If made Indifferent, Ebbasheyth tells the characters the archives might hold details of Azalin's schemes. If asked what name to search for, she doesn't know but relates that the spirit in the room below might.

Conclusion. The biography of Firan Zal'honan in the archive reveals the secret of Azalin's disappearance. From this, the characters should know how to find or restore Azalin or how to recover his power. Each character also earns a bonus 9,800 XP.

Dementlieu

Domain of Decadent Delusion

Darklord: Saidra d'Honaire

Genres: Dark fantasy and psychological horror

Hallmarks: Masquerades, decadent aristocracy, social decay, illusions, impostor syndrome

Mist Talismans: Jeweled or feathered mask, article of well-worn fine clothing, shoe made of glass or gold

Aligned Tarokka Card: Charlatan

Opposed Tarokka Card: Seer

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Composed of the city of Port-a-Lucine and its shining, fog-shrouded outskirts, Dementlieu is a realm where the truth is smothered by collective delusion. Everything in Port-a-Lucine appears to be more than it is, and people behave as if the few examples of grandeur and prosperity were the norm. Beneath its facade, the city is rotten.

Despite pervasive claims of happiness and success, the people of Dementlieu fight to survive and maintain social appearances. Every individual struggles to hide their struggles. Lying is central to life in the domain, creating a breeding ground for con artists and smiling villains.

Behind the domain's denial of reality is its Darklord, the phantomlike Duchess Saidra d'Honaire. The cynosure of high society, this masked duchess ensnares the city's upper class in her exaggerated ideas of luxury and civility. During her weekly masquerade balls, Saidra's guests must perform to her expectations. Those who fail to charm her are decried as impostors and reduced to ash by her magic. Saidra's terror also grips the city's desperate. Her murderous, unmasked form—the Red Death—stalks the benighted streets, preying on any who tarnish her preposterous vision of a perfect society.

Domain Features

Dementlieu is known for the following features:

City of Lies. Nothing in Port-a-Lucine is as it appears. Everyone pretends to be more successful than they are. Lies great and small fill everyday communication. All residents know these truths, but none dares speak of them.

Grand Masquerade. Every week Duchess d'Honaire holds a Grand Masquerade. Invitations are coveted, and invitees who don't attend rarely survive for long.

Lord Governor. Administration of Port-a-Lucine rests in the hands of Lord Governor Marcel Guignol. He is counseled by aristocratic advisers, including the duchess.

Masks. Decorative masks are common accessories, worn at social events and in daily life.

Locations in Dementlieu

Port-a-Lucine's grand structures and garish promenades dazzle viewers, distracting most from the grimy streets and cramped homes beyond. The countryside of Chateaufaux is described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Dementlieu Locations table.

Chateaufaux

The people of Port-a-Lucine speak of the countryside, Chateaufaux, where nobles summer at their estates and where idyllic villages send goods for sale into the city. But no one travels far beyond the city walls, no goods arrive from beyond, and Chateaufaux doesn't actually exist. The Mists creep close to Port-a-Lucine, occasionally exposing patches of forests and meadows but nothing more. Nevertheless, Chateaufaux remains a convenient explanation for whatever mysteriously appears or disappears.

Map 2.8: Dementlieu

Francesca Baerald

Player Version

Francesca Baerald

Dementlieu Locations

Location	Description
Bonniville Museum of the Sea	Green windows tint this museum's collection of aquatic oddities and preserved sea creatures in drowned light. A display of the wolfish masthead of the S.S. Bonniville is said to be cursed.
D'Honaire Estate	The home of Saidra d'Honaire and the site of her Grand Masquerades is accessible only by the nobles' stylish gondolas or larger ships (see "Saidra's Lair").
Great Library	The Great Library's supposedly peerless collection houses fewer than a thousand titles, but hundreds of copies of each. A few rare tomes hide among the unremarkable copies.
House of Wax	Alexandre du Cire's House of Wax displays wax copies of nobles and celebrities. In the basements, those who've been replaced by lifelike wax constructs remain imprisoned.
Lord Governor's Manor	The lord governor's home is the largest and most ornate in the city. The staff maintains only a portion of the estate, as the rest is said to be haunted by the city's former rulers.
Mother of Tears Cathedral	The Ezra-worshipping clergy of the grandiose Mother of Tears Cathedral weep for all the suffering and horror of the world but take no action to cure or combat it.
Palace of Enlightenment	The seat of Port-a-Lucine's government is filled with empty council chambers. A few caretakers mind the gardens and the collections of art, civil records, and architectural plans.
Phlegethan Hospital	A patient with a preternatural ability to bend others to his will has taken over the Phlegethan Hospital. He controls its doctors and claims to be the rightful Duke d'Honaire.
Port-a-Lucine Opera House	The opera is Port-a-Lucine's hub of culture and boasts ornate galleries, but the backstage areas are a labyrinth where crew members occasionally go missing—victims of fierce feuds.
Red Widow Theater	A sculpture of a giant crimson spider looms over the lively Red Widow Theater. Patrons seem undeterred by stories of shape-shifting spiders that hunt the theater's clientele.
Three Odd Gables	A coven of godmotherly Green Hags lives in three crooked houses on Mill Street. The hags fulfill their guests' dreams, but their contracts always have a hidden catch.
University of Dementlieu	The University of Dementlieu is largely occupied by narcissistic nobles and their fatuous students. Some true scholars conduct actual research hidden from their clout-chasing peers.

Location	Description
Zuvich Hospital	Zuvich Hospital offers skilled, science-based medical care. Dr. Doloros Zuvich recognizes that some of her patients' accounts describe encounters with supernatural beings.

Saidra d'Honaire

Darklord Who Rules Illusions

Lenka Šimečková

"*Welcome, treasured guests—you bright jewels in my city's sterling crown. Bask in all you've earned and deserve. Oh... that's not a loose button, is it?*"

— Saidra d'Honaire

Duchess Saidra d'Honaire knows her life isn't her own—she knows she isn't alive at all—yet she ignores that for the sparkle of empty celebrations and a parody of her ideal life. The duchess terrorizes Dementlieu, forcing the realm to conform to her desires. Those who expose the flaws in her fantasy and remind her of the desperation she once endured, she slays using her life-sapping power.

All can plainly see Duchess d'Honaire isn't one of the living. Nevertheless, servants and sycophants flatter her poise, beauty, and array of lavish masquerade costumes. When not hosting decadent social events, Saidra removes her mask and slips into the night. Through the streets and alleys of Port-a-Lucine, the Darklord prowls as the Red Death: a murderous spirit that preys on liars, the struggling, and all who remind her of her humble origins.

Saidra is overbearing and elitist, despite being unworldly. She fears being exposed as a fraud and projects this fear onto others, violently accusing them of being liars on the barest evidence or sign of vulgarity. Yet, in mysterious letters and rumors, Saidra receives evidence that her own simple, spiteful family dwells somewhere beyond her city. Their confessions could bring all her deceptions to light.

Saidra d'Honaire

RHW p72

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+11 (21)	90 (12d8 + 36)	5 ft., Fly 60 ft. (hover)	9 (XP 5,000, or 5,900 in lair; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	6	-2	-2	**Dex**	17	+3	+7	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	12	+1	+1	**Wis**	14	+2	+6	**Cha**	17	+3	+3

Skills Insight +10, Perception +6, Performance +7, Stealth +7

Res. Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Saidra dies, she revives with all her Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Dementlieu.

Incorporeal Movement. Saidra can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Saidra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Lie Detector. Saidra knows whether she hears a lie.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Saidra has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls

Actions

Multiattack. Saidra makes three Necrotic Burst attacks. She can replace one of these attacks with a use of Spellcasting.

Necrotic Burst. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) Necrotic damage.

Life Drain. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature Saidra can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Necrotic damage, and its Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the damage taken. *Success:* Half damage only.

At Will: Charm Person (duchess form only), Fear (Red Death form only).

Spellcasting. Saidra casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

Truth or Die (1/Day). Saidra asks a creature she can see within 60 feet to identify itself and casts Disintegrate targeting the creature, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (DC 15, with Disadvantage if the target lies).

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. Saidra shape-shifts into the Red Death, or she returns to her true form as the duchess. Her game statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Saidra can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Saidra regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Lash Out. Saidra makes one Necrotic Burst attack.

Shadow Veil. Saidra gives herself the Invisible condition until the start of her next turn and can fly up to half her Fly Speed. The condition ends early immediately after Saidra deals damage. Saidra can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Regional Effects

Dementlieu is altered by Saidra's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Saidra can close or open the borders to Dementlieu at will. While the borders are closed, the countryside called Chateaufaux appears in the Mists surrounding Dementlieu. Creatures in the Mists get lost amid mazelike hedgerows and fogbanks, only to reappear on the outskirts of Port-a-Lucine 2d6 hours later.

Empowered Actors. Humanoids add 1d8 to Charisma (Deception or Performance) checks made while wearing a mask.

Invitation. At dawn, Saidra can choose a creature whose name she knows or that she's seen before. A simple mask and an invitation to the next Grand Masquerade appear to that creature. The letter and mask appear in an unobserved but obvious space, such as a bedside table or among gear.

If Saidra dies, these effects end immediately. The effects resume if Saidra gains a new body (see her Darklord Restoration trait).

Saidra's Tale

Despite being raised in poverty, Saidra d'Honaire was an arrogant bully whose father led her to believe she was secretly royalty. When her father remarried, Saidra suffered slights and mockery at the hands of her callous stepmother and stepsisters.

The night her father revealed that Saidra was only distantly related to nobility, she fled into the night. At her mother's grave, Saidra's curses were overheard by a mysterious stranger. This grandmotherly figure offered to grant Saidra any wish. When the stranger heard Saidra's desire, she cackled and dressed the girl in rubies and a crimson gown. Resplendent, Saidra set off to the masquerade ball celebrating the coronation of the land's new duke.

At the masquerade, Saidra charmed the duke and his court. Yet, as bells tolled midnight, the gems on her dress evaporated, releasing a magical poison. The evil magic killed everyone at the masquerade, a massacre that would have fulfilled Saidra's murderous wish and left her within reach of the throne. As Saidra toured a palace full of the dying, clouds of spreading poison rose in a mysterious mist.

When the mist cleared, Saidra found herself in a grand estate in Port-a-Lucine. The estate's servants acknowledged her as their duchess, but the lethal poison had dissolved Saidra's body into a deathly vapor. As none seemed to notice, Saidra embraced the fantasy that she had achieved her vain desires.

Saidra's Domain

Dementlieu is altered by Saidra's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Saidra can close or open the borders to Dementlieu at will. While the borders are closed, the countryside called Chateaufaux appears in the Mists surrounding Dementlieu. Creatures in the Mists get lost amid mazelike hedgerows and fogbanks, only to reappear on the outskirts of Port-a-Lucine 2d6 hours later.

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If Saidra dies, these effects end immediately. The effects resume if Saidra gains a new body (see her Darklord Restoration trait).

Saidra's Lair

The duchess dwells at the d'Honaire Estate. This lavish manor and its manicured grounds cover the largest island in Lucine Bay.

D'Honaire Estate

The d'Honaire Estate is well lit and filled with expensive decor and artwork—some of it quite good, but most is of middling quality. The estate is depicted on map 2.9 and has the following features:

Grand Entry. A grand staircase sweeps from the estate's entry to airy balconies above. This broad space also serves as a ballroom and is the focus of the duchess's social events.

Salons. Elegant rooms with distinct themes fill the estate. Popular spaces include the Skobeloff Salon (themed like a sunken ship), the Sulfur Salon (with dizzying wallpaper), and the Taupe Salon (filled with underwhelming taxidermies).

Sea Caves and Docks. Those who travel to the island estate by gondola dock in this sculpted sea cave. Stairs rise from the docks to the main estate.

Second Floor. The halls remain locked and guarded. Within are the duchess's quarters, a joyless, hollow space that the Darklord haunts between stalkings and social events.

Adventures in Dementlieu

Adventures set in Dementlieu feature mystery and deception, often involving illusions and fairy-tale grandeur masking depravity and murder. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

The desperate elite of Port-a-Lucine gather at Duchess d'Honaire's island estate for the Grand Masquerade

Sylvain Sarrailh

Horror in Dementlieu

Adventures in Dementlieu often include the following elements.

Lies and Liars

In Dementlieu, one can take little at face value. Terrible food might be called gourmet, while horrendous art might be dubbed avant garde. Those who resist such claims might find themselves mocked for not understanding a thing's appeal. This can lead to challenges that range from the comical to the surreal. Roll on or choose a result from the Dementlieu Deceptions table to inspire overlooked events that might lead to broader consequences.

Dementlieu Deceptions

1d6	A Dementlieuse Liar...
1	Claims to personally know Duchess d'Honaire and so deserve special treatment.
2	Insists they're investing all their resources in solving a problem they're clearly ignoring.
3	Is publicly trapped or wounded but claims to passersby that they're fine.
4	Passes off their rat-meat pies and gutter-water wine as food fads.
5	Poses as an expert, but their advice is ludicrous or dangerous nonsense.
6	Says their stolen wares come from Chateaufaux.

Scourge of the Red Death

Between masquerades, Saidra d'Honaire fixates on her past and her fear that people suspect her ignoble origins. At these times, her glamorous facade fades, reducing her to a crimson spirit. In this guise, she slips into the night and scours Port-a-Lucine, targeting the sick, poor, or uncouth; those who disparage nobles; and those she suspects of investigating her past. The resulting life-drained bodies are attributed to a notorious figure locals call the Red Death.

Using the Red Death. While Port-a-Lucine's residents ignore the Red Death's victims—potentially chiding corpses for their laziness or public drunkenness—the characters are unlikely to overlook bodies so clearly drained of life. Use such corpses to remind the group that the lies of Dementlieu's people are dangerous denials of reality.

Dementlieu Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Dementlieu often involve the discovery and unraveling of a conspiracy. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–3. Someone asks the characters in Port-a-Lucine for help finding a missing friend, opera performer, or noble. Following the clues, the characters learn this is but one of a rash of disappearances involving dangerous creatures hiding in plain sight—such as Gargoyles, Wererats, or Waxworks (see chapter 5).

Level 4–5. The mystery points toward an elite member of society. The characters can't gain access to this individual, but they know the noble attends the Grand Masquerade of Duchess d'Honaire. The characters must prepare for and infiltrate the event (detailed below) to learn more.

Levels 6–8. Learning that the suspicious noble supports or benefits from the disappearances, the characters investigate the noble's home or business (such as the opera house or House of Wax). There, they discover and disrupt the creatures behind the disappearances, likely finding that the vanished people have been turned into monsters. If the noble escapes, an unrefusable invitation to the Grand Masquerade might draw them out, resulting in a showdown during that event—and potentially attracting the ire of Duchess d'Honaire.

The Grand Masquerade

Adventure for Level 4 Characters

Situation. The Grand Masquerade is an opportunity for characters to meet Dementlieuse nobles and gain information they can't otherwise access.

Hook. The date of the next masquerade is public knowledge. To attend, the characters need to create their own costumes and invitations.

Map 2.9: D'Honaire Estate

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Encounters

The adventure uses map 2.9 and consists of these encounters.

Dressed to Kill. Attendees at the Grand Masquerade are expected to sport lavish costumes featuring fanciful masks. Any character not wearing an appropriate Costume, a mask, and at least 100 GP worth of jewelry (or appropriate magical alternatives) has Disadvantage on Charisma checks made during this adventure. Armor can't be worn with a nonmagical costume. If a character becomes Bloodied while wearing a nonmagical costume, their costume is destroyed.

Arrival. At the entrance to the estate, servants check the characters' invitations. A character with a forged invitation must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check to be admitted. Those who fail are asked to leave. If they refuse, four Ghouls wearing formal wear and masks fight them.

Masquerade. The Grand Masquerade unfolds in three tableaux. During each, the characters can decide to dance, gossip, flirt, or do something else. Each character can earn renown for their group with the ball's attendees and host by making positive impressions on other guests (see chapter 3 of the Dungeon Master's Guide for details on renown). Each positive interaction can increase the group's Renown Score by 1 per character per tableau.

Duchess d'Honaire has yet to appear, but hundreds of other costumed nobles mingle during the masquerade. These masked guests might share their names, but a character must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to identify even someone they're familiar with. The following guests pay particular attention to the characters:

Alexandre du Cire (Medium Waxwork; see chapter 5) poses as a human and runs the House of Wax. He urges the characters to visit his establishment. His costume is a suit on one side and a ball gown on the other. He is Friendly.

Angel Pajaro (Medium Werewolf) is a famed diva of the Port-a-Lucine opera and is Hostile. She likes to humiliate her fans but loves flattery from other performers. She's dressed as an arctic fox.

Julienne d'Honaire (Medium, Neutral Good Bandit) is a Friendly human. She's bubbly and behaves in an unrefined manner. She claims to be related to the duchess but confides that she wasn't invited. Julienne wears a secondhand ballerina costume.

Lord Governor Marcel Guignol (Medium Noble) is Indifferent and didn't want to attend the event. The elderly human is jittery and hates loud noises, and he seeks an excuse to leave. He's dressed as a smiling jester.

Raoul Rameau (Medium Guard Captain) is a member of the city watch. He tries to guess who people are and why they've been invited—his hunches are poor. He's dressed as a toy monkey with cymbals.

Uncouth Exchange. After the second tableau, two revelers wearing the same costumes as two nearby characters spot their lookalikes. Outraged by this faux pas, these Berserkers fight them, wielding sharpened candelabras (these function as Greataxes). If the characters defeat their attackers, their Renown Score increases by 2.

The Duchess Appears. After three tableaux, Saidra d'Honaire (see earlier in this chapter) appears. She is fabulous and terrible as she drifts over the flattering crowd. Nearing the characters, she halts, gasps in revulsion, and points. "You! Never have I seen such an audaciously incompetent impostor! Who do you think you are to violate these hallowed halls?!" Near a character, Julienne d'Honaire begins to reply, and the duchess instantly disintegrates her. A ghoulish servant soon appears with a dustpan to clean the spot where Julienne stood. If party members spent two or more tableaux with Julienne, the group's Renown Score decreases by 1.

Conclusion. If the group's Renown Score is 5 or less, the duchess shrieks, outraged to find more unworthies. Right away, four Ghoul servants appear and fight the characters; two **Ghouls** arrive every round until the party flees the estate. The duchess doesn't fight.

If the characters' Renown Score is at least 6, the duchess compliments one of their costumes as she drifts by in time with the music. If the characters came to the masquerade to meet or influence someone, that individual appears soon after, impressed by the duchess's compliment. Other members of the city's nobility or individuals the characters met earlier in the night also might approach them with invitations or offers of employment. Each character earns a bonus 600 XP.

Falkovnia

Domain Besieged by the Dead

Darklord: Vladeska Drakov

Genre: Disaster horror

Hallmarks: Dwindling resources, impending disaster, suspicion, totalitarianism, zombies

Mist Talismans: Correspondence from the capital, Lekar; gear marked with the Blood Falcon; zombie flesh

Aligned Tarokka Card: Dictator

Opposed Tarokka Card: Executioner

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Falkovnia is a land besieged. Empty countryside surrounds ruined or crumbling cities. Only a few desperate pockets of civilization survive, carrying on not out of hope, but out of fear of the land's merciless soldiers. Led by General Vladeska Drakov, Falkovnia's military organizes a desperate and occasionally effective defense against an implacable foe: the ever-growing armies of the dead.

Every moon, a new zombie legion emerges from the Mists. Never appearing from the same place twice, the horde sweeps across the land, drawn to the densest populations of the living. That always includes the Falkovnian capital of Lekar, where unfit and underfed conscripts defend crumbling walls alongside General Drakov and her crimson-armored elite soldiers, the Talons. Causalities mount during the zombie sieges, but miracles and moments of desperate valor haven't abandoned Falkovnia. The people's numbers dwindle, but they soldier on.

In the aftermath of a zombie attack, the Falkovnians burn their dead, repair what they can, and whisper that now might be the time to flee the city. Invariably, someone speaks too loudly, and soldiers drag off the so-called traitor to be impaled as an example. The people might want to abandon their homes, but Vladeska Drakov refuses to accept defeat.

Domain Features

Falkovnia is known for the following features:

Army of the Dead. Every night of the new moon, thousands of ravenous zombies emerge from the Mists to feed on the living.

Capital Punishment. There is only one punishment for any crime in Falkovnia: impalement.

Rotten Remnants. Ruins cover Falkovnia—towns and villages crushed by zombie hordes and haunted by undead stragglers.

Talon Soldiers. Falkovnian soldiers known as Talons patrol the land, hunting for deserters and strangers to press into service. Talon officers bear prominent tattoos of the Blood Falcon, the symbol of Vladeska Drakov.

Locations in Falkovnia

Falkovnia is an unnervingly still domain, where people and animals hide to avoid attracting the attention of zombies and Drakov's brutal Talons. The city of Lekar is described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Falkovnia Locations table.

Lekar

The only city of the living left in Falkovnia, Lekar bears the brunt of the zombie invasion. The city has outgrown its walls multiple times since its founding, leaving its districts divided by fortifications. During the first zombie siege, General Drakov sacrificed the northern River Ward, leaving hundreds of souls to be slaughtered but allowing the remaining defenders to turn back the zombie horde.

Now the city's survivors face harsh conditions. Talon soldiers keep the peace in the cramped slums. Troops lead civilians outside the walls to scavenge from ruins and work the fields of abandoned farms, but their harvests are never enough for the city's survivors. Though bitter and desperate, soldiers live better than civilians, assured of rations and housing in the Bastion Ward—the Talons-only district around General Drakov's command center at Custodian's Hall. From there, Drakov orders daily public executions as conscripts dispense supplies to the suffering masses.

Map 2.10: Falkovnia

Jared Blando

Player Version

Jared Blando

Falkovnia Locations

Location	Description
Aerie	Swarms of zombified birds of prey attack any living creatures near the village of Aerie, especially those who use the cable ferries crossing the Archer River.
Delmunster	Zombies avoid the idyllic village of Delmunster. People say that it is protected by a fallen star; Few suspect the Bodytaker Plant that has claimed the community.
Fort Watten	A force of Talons under the command of Major Olana Crepeau was ordered to guard Falkovnia's southern border at Fort Watten. No one in Lekar has heard from them for moons.
Hatzimvas Hospital	The doctors of the secluded Hatzimvas Hospital seek a medical or supernatural cure to zombification. Mysteriously, Drakov allows the hospital to work unimpeded.
Morfenzi	The ruins of Morfenzi hide a Talon outpost. Here the amoral scientist Vjorn Horstman conducts monstrous experiments, creating living weapons using "primal serum."
Silbervas	Fractious bands of survivors sworn to silence scavenge the ruined city of Silbervas. They avoid the ominously lit Dekovan Palace, which overlooks the ruins.

Location	Description
Stangengrad	The silent, scarred spirits of commoners and Talons haunt the ruined fortress-city of Stangengrad. Vladeska forbids entry to the city so no one can learn of the atrocity that took place there.
Stonespine Mountains	The knight Gondegal leads rebels opposed to the Talons. Her stronghold is said to be hidden in the Stonespine Mountains, but none who join Gondegal are ever seen again.
Three Traitors	Between the three lakes known as the Three Traitors is a muddy patch where Vistani often camp. These travelers have a knack for avoiding Talon patrols.
Vigila Forest	In the dense Vigila Forest stand towering black trees called Sentries of Death. Tales say the wood is haunted and these trees' roots reach into the realm of the dead.
Willow Watch	The hastily constructed Willow Watch tower was built on the ruins of a church of Ezra. The Talons here report strange lights in the nearby forest and sounds from the catacombs below.

Vladeska Drakov

Darklord Who Wars Against the Dead

Marianne Khalil

"If you're reinforcements, I expect you to prove you're worth the gear you're wearing. I need soldiers, not more bait for the undead."

— Vladeska Drakov

General of a demoralized occupying army, Vladeska Drakov rules what little of Falkovnia hasn't been overrun by the dead. A cunning authoritarian, she believes any tactics—no matter how immoral—are permissible in the pursuit of victory. The Mists torment her by keeping her ever on the edge of defeat, exhausting her and forcing her to watch her precision fail in the face of an endless string of emergencies and an undefeatable enemy

horde. Drakov is ever being pushed to the edge. Hunger, sleep deprivation, and the endless demands of terrified troops and civilians drive her toward outbursts of paranoia and violence.

Vladeska Drakov

RHW p80

Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
18	+6 (16)	170 (20d8 + 80)	30 ft.	12 (XP 8,400, or 10,000 in lair; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	19	+4	+4	Dex	15	+2	+2	Con	18	+4	+8
Int	14	+2	+2	Wis	13	+1	+1	Cha	16	+3	+7

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5

Imm. Frightened

Gear Pike, six Spears, Studded Leather Armor

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Orc

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Vladeska dies, she revives with all her Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Falkovnia.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Vladeska fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Vladeska makes two Pike attacks. She can replace one attack with an Impaling Spear attack.

Impaling Spear. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Piercing damage, and the target is impaled on Vladeska's spear. While impaled, the creature has the Restrained condition and takes 3 (1d6) Piercing damage at the start of each of its turns. The target or a creature within 5 feet of it can take an action to remove it from the spear.

Pike. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) Piercing damage.

Artillery Fire (1/Day). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 20-foot-radius, 60-foot-high Cylinder centered on a point Vladeska can see within 300 feet. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) Fire damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Reactions

Redirect Attack. *Trigger:* A creature Vladeska can see makes an attack roll against her. *Response:* Vladeska chooses a Small or Medium ally within 5 feet of herself. She and that ally swap places, and the ally becomes the target of the attack instead.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Vladeska can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Vladeska regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Advance. Vladeska moves up to half her Speed and makes one Pike attack.

Dreadful Impaling. Vladeska makes an Impaling Spear attack. If the attack hits and the target is a creature, each ally of the target within 30 feet is subjected to the following effect. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn. *Failure or Success:* Vladeska can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Order Ballista. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature Vladeska can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 14 (4d6 + 3) Piercing damage, and the target's Speed is halved until the end of its next turn.

Regional Effects

Falkovnia is altered by Drakov's presence, creating the following effects:

Authoritarian Regime. Drakov's allies have Advantage on Wisdom saving throws.

Closing the Borders. Drakov can't close or open the borders of her domain. Falkovnia's borders are usually closed, but they open one week every month starting on the night of the new moon.

Endless War. Whenever a creature other than Drakov or her allies finishes a Long Rest in the domain, roll 1d20. On a 1, the creature doesn't remove any Exhaustion levels as a result of finishing that rest, and the creature gains 1 Exhaustion level.

If Drakov dies, these effects end immediately.

Drakov's Tale

In the world of her birth, Vladeska Drakov was known as the Crimson Falcon, leader of a peerless mercenary army called the Falcon's Talons. In a land of bitterly feuding royal families, she and her troops executed a thousand ancient grudges and petty atrocities. Drakov amassed a fortune and planned to retire young and buy a title and a realm to rule.

The sacking of Yeivere changed her plans. During that city's razing, Drakov's mercenaries went too far. The Falcon's Talons killed a unique soul during the slaughter. None can say who the soul was—a royal, a saint, a witch, an angel—but with its death, the world turned against them.

The ruling families united to hunt the Talons. Thanks to her tactical genius, Drakov repelled her pursuers and went on the offensive. One by one she attacked her former benefactors, burning villages, pressing citizens into service, and impaling anyone with a drop of noble blood. Over years of work, Drakov forged a bloody empire. But while sacking the burning city of her last remaining foe, Drakov and her troops were engulfed by smoke. When it cleared, everything they knew was gone.

Transported to an unfamiliar land, Drakov and her troops wasted little time subjugating it. This unprepared realm fell quickly, almost willingly. On taking the city of Lekar, Drakov named herself ruler of her new empire: Falkovnia.

However, under a moonless sky, the dead rose against Drakov, claws scraping against Lekar's walls before alarms could be raised. Drakov's brilliant and desperate strategies eventually turned back the zombies during the days-long First Siege of Lekar, but victory came at the cost of most of her veteran troops.

Since then, Drakov has nearly lost her nation. Every moon, a new desperate battle unfolds. She prepares ceaselessly for each one, certain of her ultimate victory but doubtful of her troops' mettle. With threats and public impalings, she keeps her people more terrified of her than of the undead. And with every new moon, she faces an unconquerable foe, never revealing a secret only she knows: that each zombie bears the face of an innocent her soldiers once put to the sword.

Custodian's Hall rises over the few remaining wards of Lekar that haven't fallen to the zombie hordes

Miro Petrov

Drakov's Domain

Falkovnia is altered by Drakov's presence, creating the following effects:

Authoritarian Regime. Drakov's allies have Advantage on Wisdom saving throws.

Closing the Borders. Drakov can't close or open the borders of her domain. Falkovnia's borders are usually closed, but they open one week every month starting on the night of the new moon.

Endless War. Whenever a creature other than Drakov or her allies finishes a Long Rest in the domain, roll 1d20. On a 1, the creature doesn't remove any Exhaustion levels as a result of finishing that rest, and the creature gains 1 Exhaustion level.

If Drakov dies, these effects end immediately.

Drakov's Lair

When she conquered the city, Vladeska Drakov claimed Lekar's seat of governance, Custodian's Hall, as her army's headquarters. Since the First Siege of Lekar, one emergency after another has forced Drakov and her Talon troops to repurpose the building's chambers for military purposes.

Map 2.11: Custodian's Hall

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Custodian's Hall

The polished marble and hopeful mosaics of Custodian's Hall now bear the dirt and scars of invaders' boots and tools of war. The site is depicted on map 2.11 and has the following features:

Chamber of Peers. The chamber of Lekar's dissolved senate now serves as a command center for Drakov's officers.

Drakov's Chambers. Drakov has repurposed offices at the heights of Custodian's Hall as her personal chambers. Her bedroom is cold and simple and features little more than a hard cot. Nearby, she maintains a war room full of maps and reports where she obsesses over desperate battle scenarios. Across the hall is a well-used chamber full of torture devices, many of her own design.

Plaza Stairs. Daily, Talons disseminate meager rations to Lekar's citizens while other soldiers execute supposed traitors by impaling them on pikes.

Adventures in Falkovnia

Adventures set in Falkovnia involve zombie hordes, cruel soldiers, and Drakov herself. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Horror in Falkovnia

Adventures in Falkovnia often include the following elements.

Zombie March

Zombies emerge from the Mists on the night of the new moon. This surge brings a recurring threat to besiege the walls of Lekar, but it also makes encountering droves of zombies more likely throughout the domain. Use the zombies from chapter 5, the Monster Manual or other sources to create surprising and terrifying encounters.

The Falcon's Talons

Drakov's military forces are both completely overwhelming and entirely outnumbered. Though relatively few in number, the Talons are organized enough to oppress Falkovnia's survivors and enforce Drakov's totalitarian laws. In the face of zombie hordes, though, the Talons are fighting a losing battle. Talon soldiers are Warrior Infantry, while officers are Warrior Veterans.

Martial Law

Lekar is a martial dictatorship. Drakov's troops carry out example-setting impalings as punishment for even the slightest crimes. These executions impose order through terror and make it clear that zombies aren't the realm's only monsters.

Only Bad Choices

There is one simple truth in Falkovnia: The dead are going to kill everyone. This sets the stage for countless bad decisions, from leaders making terrible sacrifices or permitting immoral acts to individuals making fatalistic choices. Locals behave as if it's their last day alive—because it probably is.

Trapped with the Dead

Falkovnia's borders are usually closed, and Vladeska Drakov has no control over when they open. Anyone who enters the Mists surrounding Falkovnia encounters endless numbers of zombies. Travelers who somehow avoid these shambling corpses emerge from the Mists back in Falkovnia, pursued by the undead. For one week following the night of the new moon, the Mists are empty of zombies and the borders open.

During this time, Drakov sends patrols of Talons to sweep the edges of the Mists for deserters. These patrols are difficult to avoid, and battles with them often attract zombies.

Falkovnia Campaign Arc

Falkovnia is one of the few domains where the characters and the Darklord might be on the same side, united against unrelenting hordes of zombies. The characters might try to defend Falkovnia's people alongside Drakov, but as the Darklord's obsession with victory becomes clear, they must balance keeping her trust and upholding their principles. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–4. The characters save a group of commoners and outmatched Talons from Zombies. The thankful band takes the characters to Lekar, where people hail them as heroic "Trueborn of Falkovnia." Vladeska Drakov recruits them to bring scattered pockets of common folk to safety in Lekar.

Levels 5–8. The characters witness the suffering in Lekar and see some of those they've saved impaled for disloyalty. Rebels entreat them to help smuggle people out of Lekar to hidden encampments in the mountains.

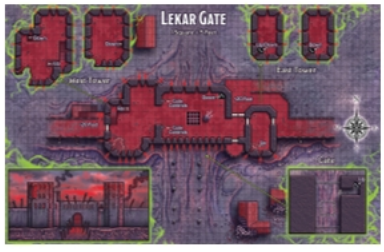
Levels 9–12. The characters are captured by Talons, but Drakov offers them freedom if they defend the city's southern gate, the Gate of Torches, from the impending zombie siege. Unknown to the characters, Drakov plans to sacrifice the gate as detailed in the "Siege of Lekar" adventure.

Siege of Lekar

Adventure for Level 9 Characters

Situation. Zombie hordes attack Lekar. Vladeska Drakov seeks to defeat them by sacrificing the characters and a district of Lekar.

Hook. The characters are ordered by Drakov or entreated by citizens to defend the Gate of Torches.



Map 2.12: Lekar Gate

Stacey Allan & William Doyle

Player Version

Stacey Allan & William Doyle

Lekar Gates

This adventure takes place at a gate in Lekar's southern wall, the Gate of Torches, and a second gate to Lekar's central district, Loyalist's Gate. The Gate of Torches shows the scars of countless zombie claws, but otherwise the gates are identical. Both have the following features:

Fortifications. The walls of Lekar are 30 feet tall, with the gatehouse's towers rising 40 feet. Crenelations atop both provide defenders with Three-Quarters Cover from beyond the wall.

Gates. The gatehouse's battle-scarred gates are Huge objects with AC 19, 72 HP, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. Any character adjacent to the mechanism over the gate can open or close the gate in 1 round.

Encounters

These encounters begin at the Gate of Torches, which uses map 2.12. Characters can position themselves where they please. Describe inexperienced soldiers guarding other posts or zombies beyond the map, but don't track their actions in battle. When you're ready to begin the siege, the Siege Events by Round table outlines what occurs each round. The following sections further detail these events.

Siege Events by Round

Round	Siege Event
1	Eight Zombies and six Ogre Zombies appear.
3	Four Ogre Zombies and a Beholder Zombie appear.
5	Two Zombie Clots appear. Talons roll a wagon to the gate from the north.
6	Talons light fuses on the wagon.
7	Four Ogre Zombies appear. Talons flee.
8	Wagon explodes (if not prevented).
9	Explosion (see "Siege Climax").

Zombie Attack. Zombies shamble from the south and attack the gatehouse's gates. Rather than having foes make individual attacks on the gates, assume the gates take 4d6 damage every time a round ends with a zombie adjacent to them. When reduced to 0 Hit Points, the gate is destroyed. If this occurs, troops flee as detailed in "Siege Climax."

Drakov's Talons. Starting on round 5, any character on or behind the walls who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notices Talons (four Warrior Veterans) behind the gate. The Talons are supposedly allied troops, so this shouldn't cause concern. The Talons behave as detailed on the Siege Events by Round table. They flee if fought.

Talon Wagon. This wagon contains kegs of gunpowder. A character adjacent to the wagon who spends a round investigating discovers these explosives. On round 6, any character who has noticed the Talons and is within sight of them sees them setting fuses. If no one prevents the soldiers from lighting the fuses or extinguishes the lit fuses, the wagon explodes at the end of round 8. Creatures within 30 feet of it when it explodes make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) Fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion destroys the gatehouse's gate, regardless of its remaining Hit Points.

Siege Climax. The siege continues until either the gatehouse's gate is destroyed or the end of round 9. At the end of round 9, an explosion hundreds of feet to the west destroys part of the city wall, and Zombies pour into Lekar. Surviving soldiers abandon their posts—it's clear the Gate of Torches will be overrun. These survivors race through the slums to Loyalist's Gate.

Loyalist's Gate. Loyalist's Gate is identical to the Gate of Torches and uses map 2.12: Lekar Gate. When the characters arrive from the south, the gate is closed. Hundreds of surviving soldiers and slum residents scream for the guards to let them through. Talon soldiers (eight Warrior Infantry) and Vladeska Drakov (see earlier in this chapter) guard the gate. Drakov thanks the panicking assemblage for their sacrifice and reveals her plan to set the slums ablaze once the zombies flood in. The characters can open the gate to admit the crowd using the mechanism in the gatehouse, but Drakov and her troops fight to prevent this.

The characters have 4 rounds before groups of 1d6 Zombies begin appearing from the south at the end of each round. Narrate these zombies attacking the crowd, but don't track the crowd's Hit Points. If the characters open the gate before the zombies appear, each of them earns 5,900 bonus XP.

Drakov's Defeat. If Drakov is defeated, Falkovnia's borders open, and no zombies appear from the Mists for several moons. Some people rebuild, others flee into the Mists. After this time, though, Drakov reappears and slowly retakes control of Falkovnia. The borders close, and zombies return soon afterward.

Har'Akir

Domain of the Ancient Dead

Darklord: Ankhtepot

Genre: Dark fantasy

Hallmarks: Ancient tombs, desert perils, lost gods, mummies

Mist Talismans: Canopic jar, lapis lazuli scarab, scroll of hieroglyphics

Aligned Tarokka Card: Monk

Opposed Tarokka Card: Raven

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Untold generations of tombs and monuments choke on the obsidian sands of the desert domain of Har'Akir. Here, past splendors lie forgotten, and the living bow in service to the mummified god-king, Ankhtepot.

From a golden pyramid in the City of the Dead, Ankhtepot reigns as speaker for the gods and immortal pharaoh. The deathless ruler cares nothing for his domain or mortal concerns. Rather, he relentlessly sends servants in search of his one desire: his ka, the missing piece of his fractured soul.

As the pharaoh obsesses over his lost soul, his servants plague the domain in his name. In hidden tomb-courts, mummies known as the Children of Ankhtepot dominate cults as emissaries of mysterious gods. And in the mud-brick city of Muhar, Ankhtepot's priests oversee all aspects of life, apportioning food to the worthy and punishing blasphemers. But all the pharaoh's servants also pursue the Darklord's quest for his mysterious ka, though only his Children know the truth of this "treasure" he seeks. Each of them is desperate for some clue to placate Ankhtepot and spare them from his wrath.

Domain Features

Har'Akir is known for the following features:

Distant Pharaoh. The people of Har'Akir know their ruler is an immortal who resides in the golden mountain called Pharaoh's Rest. Only priests can enter this massive pyramid.

Extreme Environs. Intense heat and winds are common in Har'Akir (see the Dungeon Master's Guide), and water is scarce.

Forgotten Ruins. The deserts of Har'Akir are littered with the remnants of a strange and glorious empire. The origins of these ruins remain a mystery.

Mysterious Gods. Har'Akir's people worship a pantheon of false or silent gods. Manipulative or deluded priests oversee all aspects of society in these gods' and the pharaoh's names.

Preserved Dead. Akirrans mummify their dead so the pharaoh might call them to service. It is a crime to burn the dead.

Locations in Har'Akir

Har'Akir is dominated by treacherous, surreal deserts that obey Ankhtepot's will. The Labyrinth and city of Muhar are described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Har'Akir Locations table.

Labyrinth

Har'Akir's countless trap-laden ruins interconnect beneath the desert in a hidden maze called the Labyrinth. Monstrous Mummies and stranger creatures stalk these sprawling tunnels. Nevertheless, some priests use the few mapped sections to move about the domain unseen.

Muhar

The city of Muhar is the only permanent settlement in Har'Akir. Here, pious people thank the gods for the water and food of the Muhar Oasis. From the city's largest structure, the Temple of Ese, High Priest Isu Rehkotep speaks for Pharaoh Ankhtepot in all matters; her word is considered both royal decree and divine edict. Ankhtepot doesn't care how Isu runs Muhar so long as she maintains order and uses her influence to continue his unending search. Those who displease Isu or oppose her priest-guards are thrown into the Mouth of Oru, a pit that connects to the Labyrinth.

Map 2.13: Har'Akir

Marco Bernardini

Player Version

Marco Bernardini

Har'Akir Locations

Location	Description
Bent Pyramid	This bent, black granite pyramid has no interior or obvious purpose. Some Akirrans claim it holds the magic of a forgotten god that one can manipulate using ancient music.
City of the Dead	Massive statues and the ornate tombs of heroes and priests compose the City of the Dead. These crypts climb toward Ankhtepot's mountain-size golden pyramid, Pharaoh's Rest.
Kharafek's Excavation	The historian Kharafek has discovered numerous tombs at this excavation. Each unleashes a curse once opened, so Kharafek regularly hires new laborers to bear the brunt of these curses.

Location	Description
Muhar Oasis	Muhar Oasis supplies the city of Muhar and attracts predators such as Chimeras and Giant Scorpions. During droughts, the water recedes, revealing a lapis lazuli tomb along the banks.
Ousa's Pyramid	Ousa's Pyramid holds a gate to the afterlife, but only Thute—a jackal-headed Child of Ankhtepot—knows how to enter. Thute's jackal-masked followers seek to sacrifice all strangers.
Path of the Asp	Deadly serpents inhabit the canyon known as the Path of the Asp. The spirits of those slain by these snakes can appear to anyone they know and speak ten words before vanishing.
Red Oasis	Akirrans say that the gods gave the Red Oasis to animals and that its waters are poison to people. Supernaturally cunning lions hunt in the area and offer sacrifices to a nearby monument.
Sands of Sute	Within the desert rage two vast sandstorms: the Breath of the Forgotten and the Breath of the False. The storms impose tests that punish those whose lives lack consequence or faith.
Sek's Tears	People say the waters of Sek's Tears can heal any affliction, but grim Sphinxes guard the oasis. The answers to the sphinxes' riddles are usually found in other domains.
Senmet's Tomb	The Child of Ankhtepot named Senmet seeks to steal the pharaoh's throne. From his tomb, Senmet navigates the Labyrinth and stokes rebellion among the living and the dead.
White Oasis	The White Oasis is considered holy. A nearby abandoned quarry called River's Shelter houses numerous cursed and dying hermits who seek to cleanse themselves in the oasis.

Ankhtepot

Darklord Who Pursues Death

Anna Podedworna

"*Bow before the pharaoh—whether as a servant or as dust.*"

— Ankhtepot

Ankhtepot has known treachery and conquest. He has known divinity and rule. But now he knows simply boredom and despair. He desires only to recover his lost ka, which he knows lies hidden in Har'Akir. With it, he hopes to become mortal again, die, and face his gods' judgment. Whether this means peace or oblivion matters not to him. Ankhtepot seeks only an end, and he and his followers will be a plague on Har'Akir until he finds it.

Ankhtepot

RHW p88

Medium Undead, Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
17	+6 (16)	202 (27d8 + 81)	30 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)	17 (XP 18,000, or 20,000 in lair; PB +6)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	10	+0	+0	**Con**	17	+3	+3
Int	15	+2	+8	**Wis**	20	+5	+11	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Skills History +8, Perception +11, Religion +8

Vuln. Fire

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 60 ft., Passive Perception 21

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Ankhtepot dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Har'Akir.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Ankhtepot fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ankhtepot has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Ankhtepot makes four Negative Energy Burst attacks. He can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting to cast Power Word Stun.

Negative Energy Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +11, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 26 (6d6 + 5) Necrotic damage.

Spellcasting. Ankhtepot casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: Dispel Magic, Divination, Mage Hand (hand is Invisible), Power Word Stun

1/day each: Animate Dead, Sunburst

Touch of Death (Recharge 6). Ankhtepot touches one creature within 5 feet. If the creature has 80 Hit Points or fewer, it dies. Otherwise, it takes 52 (8d12) Necrotic damage.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Ankhtepot can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Ankhtepot regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Death Strike. Ankhtepot makes one Negative Energy Burst attack.

Hand of Fate. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 19, one Large or smaller creature Ankhtepot can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Force damage, and the target is pushed or pulled up to 20 feet straight away or toward Ankhtepot. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* Ankhtepot can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Sands of Time. Ankhtepot teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 10-foot Emanation originating from Ankhtepot at his destination space. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage, and the target magically ages 10 years. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* Ankhtepot can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Regional Effects

Har'Akir is altered by Ankhtepot's presence, creating the following effects:

Blistering Sun. Any outdoor area of Bright Light in Har'Akir is an area of extreme heat (see the Dungeon Master's Guide).

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Ankhtepot can close or open the borders to Har'Akir at will. While the borders are closed, whirling sands fill the Mists surrounding Har'Akir. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 2d6 Slashing damage.

Control Undead. Undead of CR 5 or lower in Har'Akir have the Charmed condition and obey Ankhtepot's orders.

If Ankhtepot dies, these effects end immediately.

Ankhtepot's Tale

In a nation called the Land of Reeds and Lotuses, Ankhtepot served the royal family as high priest. As old pharaohs died and new ones rose, the influential priest came to believe that the gods wanted a wiser leader to rule. On the day of a new pharaoh's ascension, Ankhtepot rallied his priests and murdered their liege. But he had misjudged the people's will, and an outraged mob rose up and executed the traitorous priests.

Moreover, Ankhtepot had misjudged the will of the gods. As he stood before them in death, the immortals forsook him, cursing him and denying him entry to the afterlife. They returned him to the world but stripped away a piece of his soul, his ka—the vital essence that inspires all living beings.

Ankhtepot awoke, trapped within his corpse, as he was mummified along with his treacherous followers. Untold centuries passed, but on the day the last memory of Ankhtepot faded from the Land of Reeds and Lotuses, the high priest's bindings rotted away, and Ankhtepot crawled forth from his sarcophagus. He emerged from his tomb in an unfamiliar land: Har'Akir.

In this new land, Ankhtepot found a pious people devoted to the same gods he once served. Over generations, he wiped out that religion, replacing it with false divinities of his own imagining for whom he alone could speak. Ankhtepot also resurrected the priests buried alongside him as mummy lords, replacing their heads with those of beasts and monsters holy to his new faith. These Children of Ankhtepot served him as they did in life, and together the dead conquered the souls of Har'Akir.

In the ages since, Ankhtepot hasn't forged the land of his ambitions. His servants scheme against him, his people don't flourish, and his monuments crumble to dust in mere centuries. Ankhtepot's ambitions have withered. Now he seeks only to reclaim his soul and use it to put an end to his accursed immortality.

Ankhtepot's Domain

Har'Akir is altered by Ankhtepot's presence, creating the following effects:

Blistering Sun. Any outdoor area of Bright Light in Har'Akir is an area of extreme heat (see the Dungeon Master's Guide).

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Ankhtepot can close or open the borders to Har'Akir at will. While the borders are closed, whirling sands fill the Mists surrounding Har'Akir. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 2d6 Slashing damage.

Control Undead. Undead of CR 5 or lower in Har'Akir have the Charmed condition and obey Ankhtepot's orders.

If Ankhtepot dies, these effects end immediately.

Ankhtepot's Lair

A mountain-size black pyramid, Ankhtepot's tomb—called Pharaoh's Rest—looms over the City of the Dead. It can be seen from all across Har'Akir.

Pharaoh's Rest Features

Ancient and ornate, Pharaoh's Rest holds countless carvings of mysterious deities and Ankhtepot as an idealized pharaoh. A labyrinth of trapped tombs, embalming rooms, and treasure chambers fills the majority of this massive pyramid. Broad paths used by Ankhtepot's servants lead past deadly side passages to the heights of the monument. Prominent locations are depicted on map 2.14 and have the following features:

Ankhtepot's Tomb. The burial treasures and reliefs lining Ankhtepot's tomb's walls are shattered, having suffered ages of Ankhtepot's frustration. Hidden behind a bejeweled throne is a thoroughly defaced sarcophagus. Within, Ankhtepot awaits word of his ka's discovery, rising only when disturbed by trespassers or at the call of servants from the funeral barge chamber below.

Funeral Barge. Ankhtepot envisions his trip to the afterlife taking place on a river. In an ornate ritual site, he has prepared a funeral barge and other ceremonial trappings necessary for his journey after his ka's recovery.

Lesser Tombs. Throughout the pyramid are shrines, mummification chambers, and the crypts of Ankhtepot's servants. These include the burial chambers of several Children of Ankhtepot and the Darklord's son, Thutepot.

Shrine of Ankhtepot. A vast, open shrine holds ominous statues of Har'Akir's gods and columns etched with exaggerated and fictitious events from Ankhtepot's rule. On the night of the full moon, a hidden magical elevator activates, granting access to the tombs above.

Adventures in Har'Akir

Adventures set in Har'Akir involve ancient secrets, manipulative cultists, the ancient dead, and the search for Ankhtepot's missing ka. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

From the Temple of Ese, the priests of Pharaoh Ankhtepot control the people of Muhar

Maihope

Horror in Har'Akir

Adventures in Har'Akir often include the following elements.

Children of Ankhtepot

Ankhtepot resurrected the priests who died alongside him as Mummy Lords, granting each the head of an animal or monster corresponding to the fictitious gods he imposed on Har'Akir. The Children of Ankhtepot style themselves as harbingers of these gods while they manipulate cults or the domain's priesthood. Some have grown tired of Ankhtepot's detachment and seek to depose the pharaoh—particularly the treacherous mummy lord Senmet.

Gods of Har'Akir

Ankhtepot has destroyed all evidence of the deities the people of Har'Akir worshipped in ages past, replacing that pantheon with gods of his own creation, as summarized on the Gods of Har'Akir table.

Gods of Har'Akir

God	Animal	Concern
Anu	Jackal	Judging the dead
Ese	Oryx	Life and the living
Neb	Rust monster	Passage from life to death
Oru	Hydra	Cosmic order
Ousa	Raven	Death and the dead
Sek	Dragonfly	Healing and life
Sute	Three-eyed cat	Despair and discord

Pharaoh's Priests

The priests of Har'Akir work Ankhtepot's will, not realizing their deities are false. They keep alert for strangers and omens related to the treasure their pharaoh covets without knowing its true nature. Promising strangers are brought to High Priest Isu Rehkotep at the Temple of Ese in Muhar. The decadent high priest wants to possess what her pharaoh seeks, planning to use it to manipulate Ankhtepot.

Pharaoh's Soul

Ankhtepot seeks his ka, the missing piece of his soul. It's up to you what form this takes. Roll on or choose a result from The Darklord's Soul table to determine the form of Ankhtepot's ka.

The Darklord's Soul

1d8	Ankhtepot's Ka Is...
1	An ankh holy to the old gods of Har'Akir.
2	A blessing granted to those who survive trials within the domain's endless sandstorms.
3	A canopic jar containing the pharaoh's heart hidden within a forgotten tomb.
4	A hawk or giant eagle that circles the sun.
5	Manifested in a joyous song sung by Muhar's people.
6	Pieces of a jewel hidden within each of the Children of Ankhtepot.
7	The soul of a character, perhaps one with the Echoing Soul feat.
8	The spirit of an innocent healer who resembles the pharaoh as he was in life.

Once the Darklord recovers his ka, Ankhtepot can restore his soul by completing an elaborate 1-hour ritual involving the sacrifice of a living person. Only then might he journey to the afterlife—whether he succeeds is up to the Dark Powers.

Frightful monuments such as Ousa's Pyramid rise from the haunted, black-sand deserts of Har'Akir

Bastien Grivet

Har'Akir Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Har'Akir often involve the domain's treacherous priests, its ancient tombs, and the hunt for Ankhtepot's ka. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–4. The characters help a priest named Basras search a trap-laden, buried palace complex for a mysterious treasure. Within, they discover a set of oversize canopic jars. They take them to Isu Rehkotep in Muhar, but the high priest deems them worthless. Basras is thrown into the Mouth of Oru.

Levels 5–10. Isu Rehkotep hires the characters to search for the pharaoh's missing treasure. She sends them to Senmet's Tomb to recover an ark full of ancient scrolls, claiming these are what the pharaoh desires. (She doesn't actually know the object of the pharaoh's search.)

Levels 11–15. After the characters return the scrolls to Isu, Basras (now an Undead), reveals that the high priest seeks to use them to control a Mummy Lord and oppose Ankhtepot, as detailed in the "Scrolls of the Dead" adventure.

Scrolls of the Dead

Adventure for Level 12 Characters

Situation. High Priest Isu Rehkotep claims to have found the treasure Ankhtepot has been searching for and prepares to offer it to him during a ritual at the pyramid of Pharaoh's Rest. In truth, she plans to use a scroll that controls the Child of Ankhtepot called Senmet to destroy the pharaoh and claim his throne.

Hook. The priest De'rah fears the pharaoh will vent his wrath on the people of Muhar when the high priest is discovered. She offers the characters 5,000 GP and a random magic item from the Relics—Rare table in the Dungeon Master's Guide if they stop Isu.

Map 2.14: Pharaoh's Rest

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Encounters

This adventure uses map 2.14 and consists of these encounters.

Exploring the Pyramid. Rehkotep's ritual takes place during the full moon, when the entrance to Pharaoh's Rest stands open. Pharaoh's Rest is a vast structure, but the path Rehkotep and her followers followed through the thick dust and sand of the lower reaches is obvious. Details of the pyramid's lower levels are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Pyramid Heights. When the characters reach the Shrine of Ankhtepot in the upper levels of Pharaoh's Rest, and when they enter the Lesser Tombs, roll on the following table to determine what lurks within.

1d6	Encounter
1	A Dao compelled to defend the pyramid
2	Three Invisible Stalkers that chant curses
3	Four Mummies and two Death Dogs
4	Two Mummies and two Shield Guardians
5	Two Stone Golems dressed as pharaohs
6	Four Wraiths made of black sand

Ritual Site. On the funeral barge level of the pyramid, Isu Rehkotep (Medium, Lawful Evil Archpriest) readies to call forth Ankhtepot from his tomb using a ritual involving a gong on the ceremonial ship. Meanwhile, two Priests and two Death Cultists defend her. Isu avoids battle, but if any of her allies fall, she produces an ancient papyrus scroll and reads it, summoning Senmet.

The Mummy. If Isu reads her scroll, 1 round after her allies are defeated, the Mummy Lord Senmet appears. Isu orders him to destroy the characters, and he obeys. Senmet fights until he or the scroll the high priest holds is destroyed. Isu doesn't join the battle and attempts to escape if Senmet is destroyed.

The Scroll. A character adjacent to Isu can steal the scroll from her by succeeding on a DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check or by taking an action if she has the Incapacitated or Restrained condition. Any character can take an action to destroy the scroll but can't use it to command Senmet. If it is destroyed, Senmet turns Hostile toward Isu.

The Pharaoh. Once Isu and Senmet are dealt with, Ankhtepot (see earlier in this chapter) appears at the path leading up to his tomb. He demands the characters depart immediately but return with his missing ka. If they do so, fabulous riches will be theirs. If they don't, they will know his wrath. Characters who escape the tomb after the encounter with Ankhtepot earn a bonus 4,700 XP.

Hazlan

Domain Doomed by Magic

Darklord: Hazlik

Genres: Dark fantasy and disaster horror

Hallmarks: Amoral spellcasters, magical experiments, magic-ravaged environment, wild magic

Mist Talismans: Eye of Hazlik amulet, gremishka foot, scrap from a red robe

Aligned Tarokka Card: Diviner

Opposed Tarokka Card: Ghost

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Hazlan is a domain drained of vitality, frayed by magical disasters, and overrun with abominations. Here the amoral, spellcasting elite have so exploited magic that it's turned erratic and dangerous to use.

Encouraging these magical abuses is Hazlik, the domain's zulkir, a title meaning wizard-overlord. The Darklord postures as the domain's most powerful wizard and views all others as either apprentices or test subjects. All the while, Hazlik hides the fact that he's lost the ability to learn new magic. Paranoid and controlling, Hazlik constantly spies on those in his domain through the Eyes of Hazlik. These pervasive, eye-shaped symbols appear on structures, decorations, clothing, and individuals across the domain—and through these eyes, the Darklord watches. Hazlik surveils his domain endlessly, reveling in the fear of his people, encouraging rivalries between his apprentices, and searching for magical innovations he can claim as his own.

Domain Features

Hazlan is known for the following features:

Eye of Hazlik. Inhabitants claim the eyelike design called the Eye of Hazlik bears Hazlik's blessing and wards off dangerous magic. In truth, the symbol is a sensor for Hazlik's magical surveillance.

Magocracy. The wizard Hazlik rules Hazlan. His apprentices have free rein to exploit the land and its people to further their magical experiments.

Shattered by Magic. The effects of magical disasters disfigure the domain, poisoning rivers with alchemical runoff, scarring the land with magical blasts, and unleashing unpredictable hazards.

Wild Magic. Magic is unreliable in Hazlan, resulting in dangerous side effects (see "Hazlan Wild Magic").

Locations in Hazlan

Magical disasters and supernatural environments make Hazlan's arid landscape even deadlier and its natural rock monuments even stranger. The settlements of Sly-Var and Toyalis are described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Hazlan Locations table.

Sly-Var

In Sly-Var, mages obsessed with earning the Darklord's favor raise architecturally discordant towers that defy physical laws. The residents magically create whatever they need, resulting in little need for trade. This leaves the labyrinthine streets and knotted bridges between intertwined compounds eerily empty. The few common folk who traverse these surreal streets often disappear—the victims of magical guardians or of wizards who see the magically deficient as stock for their experiments.

Toyalis

The largest town in Hazlan, Toyalis boasts a population of poor, hardworking commoners united by terror of the domain's magic-using elite. Colorful depictions of magical creatures, arcane symbols, and the Eye of Hazlik cover the town's rough wooden and adobe structures. Every few weeks, one of Hazlik's apprentices leads a procession of attendants and magical wonders to Toyalis in search of replacement servants, new

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apprentices, or stock for magical experiments. A carnival atmosphere ensues, with the apprentice displaying their magical accomplishments and setting up competitions to assess the locals' capabilities—magical or otherwise. When a mage's procession leaves, it takes townsfolk deemed valuable with it.

Map 2.15: Hazlan

Marco Bernardini

Player Version

Marco Bernardini

Hazlan Locations

Location	Description
Balsam Wood	A plant at the center of the dense Balsam Wood can cure any illness. Unnervingly, the forest is alive, aware, and prone to agony, screaming if someone disturbs so much as a leaf.
The Brew	Alchemical pollution from the village of Ramulai has poisoned the toxic marsh now known as the Brew. Creeks and bogs often erupt with violent fungal creatures and magical effects.
Fallen Sisters	The Fallen Sisters are three mountains that have collapsed into triangular, bottomless pits. Vistani often camp here.
Fleshless Forest	Plants and creatures in the Fleshless Forest were turned to stone. The condition is infectious.
The Lacuna	The Lacuna is a region of knee-high mists that reach toward places of powerful magic, such as Hazlik's palace, Veneficus. Anyone who steps into these mists vanishes, and few reemerge.
The Marks	The sigils of Hazlik's mightiest apprentices mark the land in giant, magic-enhancing geoglyphs. The Lacuna grows toward these Marks—and a fourth, mysterious glyph.
Moonstone Valley	Meteors and otherworldly creatures crash into this wasteland during every new moon.
Mound of the Worm	Earth from deep underground rose to form the Mound of the Worm mesa, unleashing dozens of Purple Worms. The aged, albino worm Gravedrinker dominates this region.
Orbitoclasts	The Orbitoclasts are floating rock formations that resemble lobotomy tools. Their pointed ends align toward the nearest magic-user.
Philosopher's Egg	A cult of magic-warped beings worships an eight-story, citrine egg. The cult searches for a prophet who's never been touched by magic to release the antimagic entity within.
The Playas	Former lakes, the Playas are now quicksand-riddled Purple Worm feeding grounds.
Ramulai	Mines near the village of Ramulai yield rare magical elements. Refineries process these volatile resources, but in so doing, they magically sicken the people and the land.
Seething	The lifeless Seething region crumbles away into the Mists. A heavy footfall can break its surface.

Hazlik

Darklord of Desperation and Magical Disaster

Marianne Khalil

"*You're new, I can tell. Impress me, and maybe I'll let you be my newest apprentice.*"

— Hazlik

The paranoid, egomaniacal archmage Hazlik clings to his power despite his magical ambitions being supernaturally smothered. Since Hazlik entered Hazlan, his magic has become unstable. Spells he casts behave erratically and fade swiftly—most lasting no more than an hour—while his magical creations fall apart in about a day. The idea of others learning this terrifies the Darklord, which leads him to claim others' works as his own, spy on potential rivals, and order reckless research into the nature of magic and his domain.

Hazlik suffers vivid nightmares wherein past rivals taunt and torment him. The Darklord avoids sleeping, employing magical tinctures to stay awake, but this causes him to vacillate between bouts of exhaustion, jitters, and paranoia.

Hazlik knows that his domain is being ripped apart by magical disasters—many of his own creation. He openly denies the realm's devastation, though, his fear of cascading ruin clashing with his inability to admit he's wrong.

Hazlik

RHW p98

Medium Humanoid (Human, Wizard), Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+13 (23)	154 (28d8 + 28)	30 ft.	14 (XP 11,500, or 13,000 in lair; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	16	+3	+3	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	20	+5	+10	**Wis**	15	+2	+7	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Skills Arcana +10, History +10, Perception +7

Imm. Psychic; Charmed

Gear Quarterstaff

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Undercommon

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Hazlik dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Hazlan.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Hazlik fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Hazlik has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Hazlik makes three Arcane Burst attacks.

Arcane Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. or range 150 ft. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) Force damage.

Spellcasting. Hazlik casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Disguise Self, Invisibility, Light, Mage Armor (included in AC), Mage Hand, Prestidigitation

2/day each: Fly, Lightning Bolt (level 5 version)

1/day each: Cone of Cold, Mind Blank (cast before combat), Scrying, Teleport

Bonus Actions

Wild Magic Surge. Hazlik manifests one of the following magic surges, targeting a creature he can see within 120 feet. While Bloodied, Hazlik manifests two surges (roll 1d4; reroll if Hazlik has already used that surge during this turn):

1: **Misty Movement.** Hazlik can teleport the target up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space he can see on a surface or liquid large enough to support the target.

2: **Eye Blight.** *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 18. *Failure:* The target has the Blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

3: **Mind Flare.** *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 18. *Failure:* 13 (2d12) Psychic damage, and the target can't take the Magic action until the end of its next turn.

4: **Implode.** *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18. *Failure:* The target takes 10 (3d6) Force damage. *Failure or Success:* Each creature within 5 feet of the target takes 10 (3d6) Force damage.

Reactions

Protective Magic (3/Day). Hazlik casts Counterspell or Shield in response to the spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Hazlik can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Hazlik regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Arcane Strike. Hazlik makes one Arcane Burst attack.

Arcane Teleport. Hazlik teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see, and each creature within 10 feet of the space he left takes 11 (2d10) Force damage. Hazlik can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Regional Effects

Hazlan is altered by Hazlik's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Hazlik can close or open the borders to Hazlan at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Hazlan are filled with monstrous magical experiments. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) Force damage and have the Restrained condition until the start of its next turn. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Frayed Magic. Whenever a creature (excluding Hazlik and his allies) casts a spell using a level 5+ spell slot, it rolls on the Wild Magic Surge table in the Player's Handbook to create a magical effect.

Magic Nightmares. While in his lair, Veneficus, Hazlik can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as his Spellcasting action. When the spell is cast this way, its range is all of Hazlan, Hazlik can see but can't hear through the sensor, and the sensor can appear only on an Eye of Hazlik.

If Hazlik dies, these effects end immediately. The effects resume if Hazlik gains a new body (see his Darklord Restoration trait).

Hazlik's Tale

On the world of Toril, Hazlik rose among the ranks of the merciless Red Wizards of Thay. Arrogant and convinced mortality was a weakness, he sought hidden truths of magic, ways to visit realms within the psyche, and command of reality.

As Hazlik's power increased, he developed rivalries with other Red Wizards, many of which ended with his foes magically scarred. But one rival Hazlik couldn't defeat: the wizard Indreficus. Hazlik gradually came to obsess over Indreficus, viewing him as his only worthy opponent. Indreficus shared Hazlik's genius and arrogance, and they spent seasons as vicious adversaries and passionate lovers. They drove one another to feats of magical brilliance both revolutionary and unspeakable. This culminated when Hazlik discovered that Indreficus planned to betray Hazlik to garner the favor of Thay's ruling zulkirs. Heartbroken and enraged, Hazlik captured Indreficus and subjected him to nightmarish magical manipulations that permanently transformed him into a pain-wracked, living magical portal. Hazlik presented his creation to the zulkirs, hoping to gain their patronage

The zulkirs revealed that Indreficus hadn't betrayed Hazlik. Rather, the ruling mages had watched the pair's ascent and, wary of their ambitions, undermined them before they became threats. Moreover, they deemed Hazlik's transformation of Indreficus an abomination. As punishment, the zulkirs decreed that every mage Hazlik had scarred could do the same in return to him, marking him with their personal symbols. As the first brand-wielding member of the mob of Hazlik's rivals closed on the wizard, Hazlik fled through the groaning portal that was Indreficus.

Hazlik emerged amid the pain-wracked dreamscapes of Indreficus. Unwittingly, Hazlik had entered the Domain of Dread known as the Nightmare Lands, where Indreficus's shrieking and condemnation hounded him. After months of torment, Hazlik escaped into the Mists and eventually emerged into a realm that knew nothing of magic. His Thayan tattoos had turned gold and warped into symbols meaning "traitor." Undaunted, Hazlik used his magic to dominate the people of this new realm, claiming the title of zulkir and dubbing his realm Hazlan.

Hazlik's Domain

Hazlan is altered by Hazlik's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Hazlik can close or open the borders to Hazlan at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Hazlan are filled with monstrous magical experiments. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) Force damage and have the Restrained condition until the start of its next turn. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Frayed Magic. Whenever a creature (excluding Hazlik and his allies) casts a spell using a level 5+ spell slot, it rolls on the Wild Magic Surge table in the Player's Handbook to create a magical effect.

Magic Nightmares. While in his lair, Veneficus, Hazlik can cast Clairvoyance, requiring no spell components and using the same spellcasting ability as his Spellcasting action. When the spell is cast this way, its range is all of Hazlan, Hazlik can see but can't hear through the sensor, and the sensor can appear only on an Eye of Hazlik.

If Hazlik dies, these effects end immediately. The effects resume if Hazlik gains a new body (see his Darklord Restoration trait).

Hazlik's Lair

Hazlik's crimson-towered palace, Veneficus, stands atop the jagged mesa called the Red Rise. The Darklord is attended by a staff of magical creations and his most accomplished apprentices.

Veneficus Features

Veneficus is littered with frivolous magic effects and magic items that no longer keep Hazlik's attention. The site is depicted on map 2.16 and has the following features:

Halls of Triumph. Multiple audience chambers, display galleries, and pleasure gardens rival one another in decadence, each exhibiting grotesque artwork and trophies of Hazlik's achievements.

House of Solitude. The secluded House of Solitude is magically locked, and Hazlik forbids anyone from entering. At night, muffled screams and flickering lights emanate from within.

Red Tower. Hazlik's personal chambers fill the Red Tower. Magical portals connect the untold numbers of demiplanar chambers that make up the tower. Somewhere within lies Hazlik's orrery, a multistory magical device that allows the Darklord to see through any Eye of Hazlik in the domain.

Adventures in Hazlan

Tales in Hazlan involve radical magical experiments, supernatural environments, rivalries between mages, and magical surveillance. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

The Eye of Hazlik watches the city of Sly-Var and the approaching retinue of one of the Darklord's apprentices

Sam Keiser

Horror in Hazlan

Adventures set in Hazlan often include the following elements.

Eyes of Hazlik

Hazlik spies on his domain's inhabitants using the Eye of Hazlik. This eyelike sigil adorns buildings, clothing, talismans, and creatures across the domain. Locals claim the symbol protects them from dangerous magic and creatures. Hazlik uses the eyes to spy on useful or threatening mages and to reinforce his reputation as an ever-present overlord.

Hazlik often sends loyal apprentices or magical creatures to capture those whose behavior witnessed through the eyes offended him. He turns such individuals into fodder for experimentation in Sly-Var or Veneficus.

Hazlan Wild Magic

As a result of unchecked arcane experimentation, magic functions erratically in Hazlan. Whenever a creature in Hazlan expends a spell slot to cast a spell or activates a magic item, it rolls 1d10. On a 1, it unleashes a random magical effect. Roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in chapter 3 of the Player's Handbook to determine the effect. Consider describing these results in unsettling ways that don't change their effects, as in these examples:

- Summoned creatures use the proscribed stat blocks but are cosmetically warped to resemble undead or aberrant creatures.
- Effects that teleport the caster relocate the caster into a misty expanse full of threatening shapes.

- Effects on creatures cause unsettling sensations, such as the feeling of earwigs wriggling beneath one's skin or one's teeth struggling free.

Anyone who openly wears an Eye of Hazlik can choose not to roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in this way once per day.

Hazlik's Apprentices

Dozens of mages serve as Hazlik's apprentices. Between infrequent, demeaning group lessons with the Darklord, these apprentices pit themselves against one another to impress Hazlik by pushing the boundaries of magical innovation. Those who gain Hazlik's favor are promised arcane secrets known only to the Darklord—secrets that might not exist. This creates a cadre of Hazlani mages who recklessly seek to impress Hazlik by the following means, among others:

- Changing the nature of reality to suit their whims
- Creating monuments in Hazlik's honor
- Devising new magic items, spells, or supernatural materials
- Forging unique magical servants for Hazlik
- Stealing rare magic items
- Unleashing dramatic displays of magical might

Hazlik's current favorite apprentices include the masked wizard Yhal the Skygazer, the shadow-cloaked Ruzelo, and the daring genius Eleni.

Hazlan Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Hazlan often involve mages abusing their power to garner Hazlik's fickle favor. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–3. The characters arrive in Toyalis, where servants of the mage Khrinitov abduct locals with supposed psychic potential. Eleni, an apprentice of Hazlik, believes Khrinitov's experiments are pointless. She hires the characters to rescue the villagers from Khrinitov's tower amid the Orbitoclasts. In doing so, the characters reveal Khrinitov to be an Intellect Devourer, a Brain in a Jar (see chapter 5), or another aberrant being.

Levels 4–8. Eleni reveals that she's trying to undermine Hazlik and protect the people of Hazlan. She tells the characters of a magic mineral in the Mound of the Worm that Purple Worms pursue. She encourages the party to collect the mineral and use the purple worms to destroy locations like the Marks. As the characters do so, they face magical guardians and hazards. During their travel, they're exposed to strange magic and might gain Dark Gift feats (see chapter 1).

Levels 9–12. Eleni asks the characters to come to Sly-Var to plan a raid on Hazlik's palace. There, she reveals that she's been exposing them to dangerous magic from across the domain. She entraps them with a portal that leads to arena-like laboratories connected to Veneficus, where Hazlik pits them against terrors his other apprentices have created. The characters must escape, potentially facing Eleni and Hazlik along the way.

Eyes of the Darklord

Adventure for Level 10 Characters

Situation. Subjects of magical experimentation seek to escape Hazlan, but every time they try, they're spotted through the Eyes of Hazlik, and the Darklord's apprentices hunt them down.

Hook. Allies hire the characters to help them escape Hazlan by destroying Hazlik's orrery in Veneficus. They offer to pay the party 4,000 GP once they're guided to another domain.

Map 2.16: Veneficus

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Encounters

The adventure uses map 2.16 and consists of these encounters:

Greeting at Veneficus. The rooms within Veneficus (see map 2.16) and the walls outside all bear at least one Eye of Hazlik. If the characters are spotted, one of Hazlik's former apprentices (Medium, Chaotic Evil Archmage) appears. This apprentice has been transformed to look and behave like the Darklord. The duplicate belittles the characters and fights to the death.

Galleries of Suffering. As the characters explore Veneficus, roll on the following table to determine what they find within.

1d6	Encounter
1	Another Archmage that behaves like Hazlik (see above), or a similarly disguised Incubus
2	Artwork that releases a Bone Devil if touched
3	Three Mages arguing about who's greatest
4	Three Waxworks (see chapter 5) disguised as mages arguing about who's Hazlik's favorite
5	One Stone Golem sculpted to look like Hazlik
6	Flawed Magic (see below)

Flawed Magic. Among mundane decorations, this room contains a random magic item. Roll on the Arcana—Common table in chapter 7 of the Dungeon Master's Guide. The item functions once, causes a wild magic surge (see "Hazlan Wild Magic"), and then crumbles to dust.

Red Tower. Shifting portals connect the passages in the Red Tower. Every time the characters pass through a portal in the tower, roll 1d8. If the number rolled is lower than the number of portals passed through, the characters arrive in the orrery chamber. On an 8, the characters appear at the entrance to Veneficus.

Orrery Chamber. This room is dominated by a magical orrery only Hazlik can use. It is defended by a Relentless Juggernaut. The orrery has AC 19, HP 25, and Immunity to Psychic damage. Every time the orrery takes damage, roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in chapter 3 of the Player's Handbook. Negative effects affect the character who damaged the orrery, while beneficial effects affect the juggernaut.

Hazlik. After the orrery is destroyed, Hazlik (see earlier in this chapter) appears and offers a magic-using character power and influence as his apprentice. If the character accepts, he commands that character to murder the others. If the character declines, Hazlik mocks the party. The Darklord uses magic to flee if he takes any damage, swearing revenge. Characters who destroy the orrery and escape Veneficus earn a bonus 3,100 XP.

Innsmouth

Domain of the Imprisoned Apocalyptic

Darklord: Cthulhu

Genre: Cosmic horror

Hallmarks: Cosmic horror creatures, invasive alien dreams, surreal locations, warring cults

Mist Talismans: Effigy of Great Cthulhu, starmetal rod or amulet with eldritch runes, sahuagin-tooth fishing lure

Aligned Tarokka Card: Bishop

Opposed Tarokka Card: Donjon

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Hidden amid the Domains of Dread lies a hideous realm defiant of reason and smothered by the Mists. From a violent, murky sea rises a crescent of shattered peaks, mangled spires broken like the jaws of some slain thalassic titan. From noxious fumaroles, miasmic pillars lurch from this accursed isle into a sky inconsistently lit by a distant, drowned light.

Strange ruins dot this island's rocky coasts, some suggestive of forgotten peoples, others alien in form and purpose. Massive statues of crimson-flecked bloodstone loom over sheer cliffs, each a towering effigy of some profane monstrosity or alien god. One shore bears the wreckage of a few dozen collapsing wooden structures. Little evidence remains of this settlement's residents, but at its edge lies a toppled sign bearing a word in Common that gives the island its name: Innsmouth.

Despite its forsaken appearance, the isle of Innsmouth isn't abandoned. Cults vie for control of the island, among them the servants of Great Cthulhu, a harbinger of world-rending aberrance. At the island's hidden heart, Cthulhu lies dreaming, its alien mind reaching across the Domains of Dread and beyond, drawing to it those who might rouse its full might and unleash it from its prison in the Mists.

Domain Features

Innsmouth is known for the following features:

Cosmic Horror Visions. Cthulhu's dreams draw aberrant beings and shape Innsmouth as an amalgamation of cosmic horrors, from disparate ruins on the surface to stranger realms in the depths.

Cult Haven. Evil cults devoted to the entities Cthulhu, Dagon, Olhydra, and Zhudun struggle to control the domain. These cults view strangers as useful allies (see "Cults of Innsmouth" for details).

Dreams of Cthulhu. Cthulhu seeks freedom. It manipulates the dreams of those on the island, sharing visions of their escape from the domain resulting from the same rituals that would free it.

Locations in Innsmouth

Innsmouth is an inhospitable expanse of alien mountains and ruin-littered coasts. The village of Innsmouth and the mazelike Vaults are described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Innsmouth Locations table.

Innsmouth

The ruined coastal village of Innsmouth is the most obvious shelter from the storms, alien creatures, and strange events on the island. The Cult of the Chthonic Night knows this and realizes its imprisoned master, Great Cthulhu, calls to strangers to aid the cultists in releasing it. This makes the ruined village a shadowy war zone, where cultists and their servants hunt for fresh acolytes and sacrifices.

The Vaults

Beneath the mountains of Innsmouth winds a labyrinth of improbable passages. Dramatic caverns narrow into the corridors of buried palaces that transform into the wooden halls of forgotten farmhouses. Regularly, these underground paths open into vast cavities, many with their own strange environments, weather, and celestial bodies. What lies among the Vaults? Cultists speak of the realms of alien beings, ghoul empires, countrysides ravaged by sapient energies, the dwellings of reclusive witches, and a thin place in the walls of the prison where Great Cthulhu lies trapped.

Map 2.17: Innsmouth

Francesca Baerald

Player Version

Francesca Baerald

Innsmouth Locations

Location	Description
Blind Observatory	Within a ring of bismuth monoliths called the Blind Observatory, the clouds vanish, revealing whirling galaxies. The Cult of the Heavenly Doom searches this yawning infinity for meaning.
Cleft of Dreams	Vividly colored gases escape the mouth of the sea cave called the Cleft of Dreams, which extends into surreal realms within the Vaults.
Devil Reef	Sahuagin dwell amid caves of sharp, crimson coral in the Devil Reef. They are violently divided between followers of the shark-god Sekolah and members of the Cult of the Scaly Abyss.
Drowned Colossus	The head of a giant statue depicting a half-melted, eight-eyed humanoid rises just above the waterline. Its mouth—large enough to sail a small ship through—leads to the Vaults.
Eyes of Olhydra	The swampy islands known as the Eyes of Olhydra almost disappear at high tide. At low tide, servants of Olhydra flock to a monument called the Fathomless Gate.
Graven Peak	The domain's highest mount, Graven Peak, is carved into the shape of a terrifying octopoid fiend. Its brow is etched with a mysterious, branch-like rune. Deep below lies Cthulhu's Vault.
Map of the Eclipse	Hollows in a series of standing stones depict the progression of a crumbling constellation. Cultists believe that a force capable of moving the stars left this message.
March of Elders	A procession of thirty-foot-tall bloodstone statues of gaunt, distorted figures circles the ruins of a domed structure. Some of the statues are partially buried in the nearby mountain.
Night Light	A tower blazing with a vaporous orange flame resembles a lighthouse, but the island's cultists say the Night Light is meant to draw something close rather than warn viewers away.
Phase of Uldun-Dar	These physics-defying ruins change every time they're observed, reflecting wildly different ages and cultures. Sapient, hyperdimensional cats occasionally live here.
The Wharf	A ghoul-haunted hotel called the Wharf leans precariously toward the sea.
Wrecks of the Shrike	The wreck of the Shrike lies beneath the waves, inexplicably encased in black ice. Nearby, a duplicate of the ship shows evidence of a great fire, and another duplicate lies crushed.

Cthulhu

Darklord What Eternal Lies

Brian Valenzuela

"*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.*"

— Cult of the Chthonic Night chant

Cthulhu was—and inevitably will be once more—a threat to the entire multiverse. For untold ages, the Dark Powers have bound this harbinger of doom. Unlike the other prisoners of the Domains of Dread, Cthulhu isn't plagued by ironic torments or thwarted ambitions. Rather, this ageless terror remains physically bound and can exert only a fraction of its terrible might. Nevertheless, Cthulhu's dreams slip beyond its prison, manipulating minds and orchestrating events to ensure its release and a new epoch of multiversal doom.

Cthulhu

RHW p106

Gargantuan Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
19	+9 (19)	385 (22d20 + 154)	30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Swim 60 ft.	25 (XP 75,000, or 90,000 in lair; PB +8)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	29	+9	+9	**Dex**	12	+1	+1	**Con**	25	+7	+15
Int	28	+9	+9	**Wis**	18	+4	+12	**Cha**	24	+7	+15

Skills Insight +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +15

Res. Acid, Cold, Lightning, Psychic

Imm. Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 22

Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Amphibious. Cthulhu can breathe air and water.

Darklord Restoration. If Cthulhu dies, it revives with all its Hit Points in 1d10 weeks inside the Vault of Cthulhu.

Impossible Geometry. Ground, air, and water in a 10-foot Emanation originating from Cthulhu is Difficult Terrain. A creature that starts its turn in the Emanation takes 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Domain). If Cthulhu fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Cthulhu has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Cthulhu makes three Eldritch Claw attacks and uses Spellcasting to cast Befuddlement if available or Mind Spike (level 4 version). It can replace one Eldritch Claw attack with a use of Tentacle.

Eldritch Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +17, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (2d8 + 9) Slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) Acid damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 19) from one of two limbs.

Spellcasting. Cthulhu casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 25):

At will: Mind Spike (level 4 version)

3/day each: Dream, Geas (can target creatures through dreams)

1/day each: Befuddlement, Plane Shift (self only)

Tentacle. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 25, one creature Grappled by Cthulhu. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Acid damage plus 13 (3d8) Psychic damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Psychic damage taken, and Cthulhu regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Bonus Actions

Warp. Cthulhu teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 120 feet, taking creatures it is grappling with it. Then each creature within 10 feet of the space it left is subjected to the following effect. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 25. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Thunder damage, and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Cthulhu can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Cthulhu regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Clamp. Cthulhu makes an Eldritch Claw attack.

Fold Space. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 25, each creature and object that isn't being worn or carried in a 10-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point Cthulhu can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 36 (8d8) Force damage, and the target is teleported to an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Cthulhu that is horizontal to it. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* Cthulhu can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Regional Effects

Innsmouth is altered by Cthulhu's presence, creating the following effects:

Choking Depths. A creature can hold its breath for only 30 seconds while in the domain.

Closing the Borders. While in its domain, Cthulhu can close or open the borders of Innsmouth at will. While the borders are closed, those who enter the Mists surrounding Innsmouth become lost at sea amid inky fog for 3d4 days before arriving once more at Innsmouth.

Something in the Air. Creatures other than Cthulhu and its allies have Disadvantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Frightened condition.

If Cthulhu dies, these effects end immediately.

Cthulhu's Tale

Spawned beyond the borders of the multiverse in realities where time and life have little worth, Cthulhu is a servant of elder evils and a harbinger of their inevitable ruin. For untold eons, Cthulhu's will influenced receptive minds across the multiverse, reaching out in dreams and using them to open gateways to the Far Realm. Through such portals, Cthulhu visited the Material Plane, corrupted and laid waste to civilizations, and erected city-size monuments to its mighty predecessors.

Such distortion and defilement didn't go unnoticed by the Dark Powers. Multiple times the Mists closed around dread Cthulhu, and multiple times the terror evaded them. It was drawn into the Shadowfell when an extinct cabal of mages summoned it onto a sepulchral world of the Material Plane during a once-in-an-era alignment of eclipses. With the magic of the Shadowfell enhanced, the Mists rose and drew in Cthulhu. Raging and grasping, Cthulhu dragged with it remnants of past conquests and violent minds linked to its own. These disparate nightmares became the foundation of its prison: a surreal island hidden amid the Domains of Dread.

Cthulhu's Domain

Innsmouth is altered by Cthulhu's presence, creating the following effects:

Choking Depths. A creature can hold its breath for only 30 seconds while in the domain.

Closing the Borders. While in its domain, Cthulhu can close or open the borders of Innsmouth at will. While the borders are closed, those who enter the Mists surrounding Innsmouth become lost at sea amid inky fog for 3d4 days before arriving once more at Innsmouth.

Something in the Air. Creatures other than Cthulhu and its allies have Disadvantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Frightened condition.

If Cthulhu dies, these effects end immediately.

Cthulhu's Lair

Amid surreal expanses within Innsmouth's depths lies the entrance to Cthulhu's Vault, a prison within the Mists where Cthulhu lies trapped. The entrance to Cthulhu's Vault is a ritual site etched with symbols of power from across time and hundreds of worlds. Those who perform the proper rituals, guided by visions from Cthulhu itself, might free themselves from the domain of Innsmouth, and, in so doing, unleash Cthulhu on the multiverse.

Cthulhu's Vault Features

Cthulhu's Vault is a hidden realm, but the entrance to it lies amid the Vaults beneath the island. The vault is depicted on map 2.18 and has the following features:

Noisome Brine. A dark, frothy waterway winds through the Vaults, ultimately emerging from either the Cleft of Dreams or the mouth of the Drowned Colossus.

Ritual Site. A partially toppled monument bearing a tentacled visage marks a weak point in Cthulhu's prison. Before it stands an altar etched with bizarre runes. These symbols are of otherworldly design, but each cult of Innsmouth knows the meaning of a few. Only cultists imbued with the might of all four cults can perform the ritual these runes describe and force open Cthulhu's prison.

The Perceptive. A small ship called the Perceptive lies beached here, a remnant of a group of cultists' past attempt to access Cthulhu's Vault. The bowsprit is broken, ending in a jagged point.

The Providence. The shattered remains of a ship called the Providence serves as the shelter of a mysterious seer. It's said this former cultist knows more of Cthulhu's Vault than any other creature.

Cults of Innsmouth

Four cults operate in Innsmouth, each with its own vile ends. While these groups are ruinously evil, characters might temporarily ally with one or more to oppose another foe or to escape the domain.

Cults and Cultists

The following groups vie for power on and under Innsmouth. Following each cult's name are the ritual words cult members use in their blasphemous practices, along with other details.

Cult of the Chthonic Night

Hail, Hail, Cthulhu Awaits

Worships: Cthulhu

Leader: King-Priest Eeyog-Yah

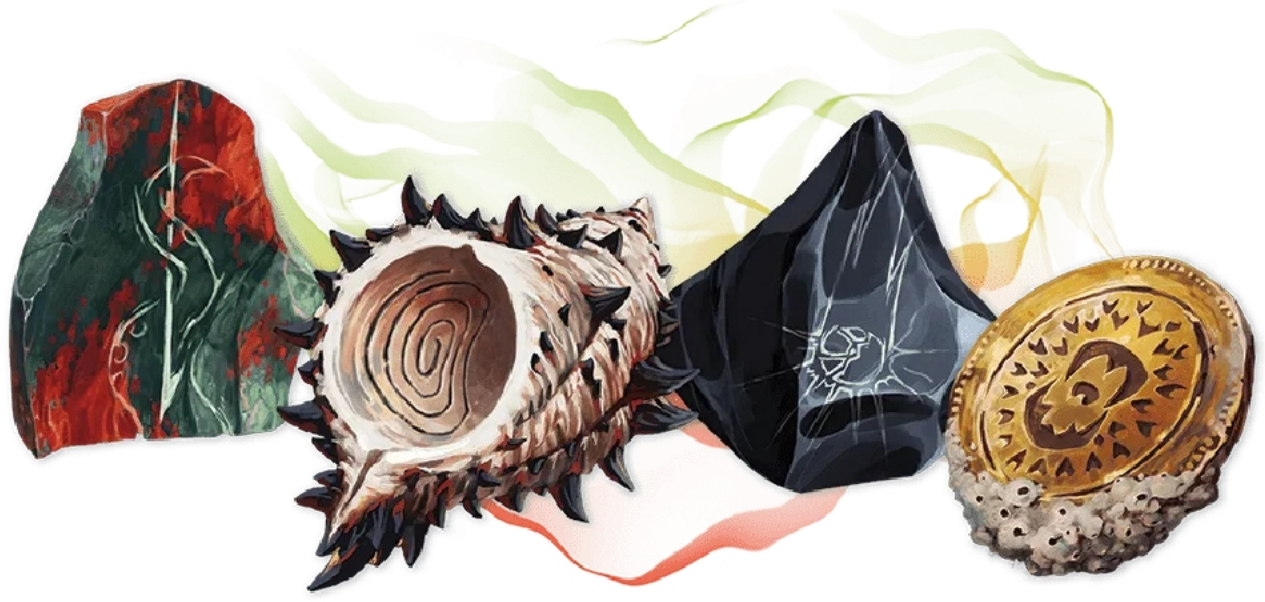
Goal: Free Cthulhu from imprisonment

Lair: The village of Innsmouth and the Vaults

Initiates of the Cult of the Chthonic Night open their minds to the whispers of Great Cthulhu and seek to free the imprisoned terror from the Domains of Dread. Predominantly composed of Aberrant Cultists and Kuo-toa that dwell amid waterlogged ruins deep below the Graven Peak, the cult interprets visions from Cthulhu as omens, calls for sacrifice, and signs of their god's coming.

King-Priest Eeyog-Yah, an ageless and desiccated Kuo-toa Archpriest, leads the cult. Eeyog-Yah occupies a state of perpetual somnambulism and narrates its visions. The priest's attendants decipher their leader's rambling as directives from their god.

Those who join the cult and participate in its induction rituals hear the voice of Cthulhu more clearly than others do (see "Cult Dark Gifts").



Symbol of the Cult of the Chthonic Night Symbol of the Cult of the Drowning Wave Symbol of the Cult of the Heavenly Doom Symbol of the Cult of the Scaly Abyss

CoupleOfKooks

Cult of the Drowning Wave

Make Clean for the Aeon Wave

Worships: Olhydra

Leader: Draa Shoom

Goal: Sink Innsmouth below the waves

Lair: Eyes of Olhydra

Those who await the Drowning Wave seek to make Innsmouth and all its inhabitants part of Olhydra's realm on the Elemental Plane of Water. Olhydra, the Prince of Evil Water, then could use the might of Cthulhu and the mass sacrifice of the island to dominate the Elemental Planes and flood the Material Plane.

Draa Shoom, the cult's Aboleth leader, believes Olhydra will return the cult to a place of dominance over countless worlds in return for its sacrifice. To effect this, Draa Shoom coaxes Elemental Cultists and shipwrecked individuals to the Eyes of Olhydra. There, amid boggy ruins and the lairs of murky elemental creatures, rises the Fathomless Gate. This ancient stone arch, thought to connect to the Elemental Plane of Water, is covered by bars of starmetal, which prevent passage by solid creatures. The cult seeks the proper rituals to open the gate, allowing Olhydra's scouring waters to flood the domain.

Those who participate in the cult's induction rituals are infused with a draught of Olhydra's sapient form (see "Cult Dark Gifts").

Cult of the Heavenly Doom

Empty Yourself to Gorge on the Stars

Worships: Zhudun

Leader: Celesta Grayl

Goal: Open gateways to join Zhudun

Lair: Blind Observatory and the Map of the Eclipse

Among the broken heights of the domain, the obsessed astronomers of the Cult of the Heavenly Doom seek signs in the heavens and omens from Zhudun, the Corpse Star, an Elder Evil that wanders space and knows the secrets of extinction. These cultists hope to climb into the heavens and join Zhudun.

The cult's leader, Celesta Grayl, has sought Zhudun for centuries. While documenting her observations, Grayl discovered a path to immortality and became a Vampire Umbral Lord. Death Cultists, along with desperate and deluded souls, have flocked to the ancient stargazer, forming the cult around Grayl and her discoveries despite their leader's protestations and predations. The vampire suffers the cultists only so long as they help her decipher secrets from ruins around the island and retrieve knowledge from the grip of other cults. She believes their discoveries will help her reveal when the stars are right to join Zhudun in the dark places between the stars.

Those who join the cult and participate in its induction rituals release a portion of their life to the stars (see "Cult Dark Gifts").

Cult of the Scaly Abyss

The Prince Awaits—Become the Way

Worships: Dagon

Leader: Xr'gh

Goal: Summon Dagon

Lair: Dagon's Claws

The followers of Dagon, Demon Prince of the Darkened Depths, lurk among and beneath the waves of Innsmouth. Ancient even among inhabitants of the Abyss, Dagon seeks to drag demon lords and their Abyssal realms into its demesne of Shadowsea. Once sated on the flesh of its foes, Dagon aspires to unleash its might across the multiverse in a sanity-shattering wave.

Xr'gh, a Sahuagin Baron fanatically devoted to Dagon, seeks to turn all who dwell beneath the waves to the demon lord's worship. Xr'gh seeks enough sacrifices to turn the sea red with blood, an offering great enough to attract Dagon's notice and draw the demon lord to Innsmouth. The cult leader expects Dagon then to feed on Cthulhu and begin its conquest of the Abyss. Ravenous Sahuagin follow Xr'gh, as do Fiend Cultists and murderers desirous of the eerie gold treasures the sahuagin offer from their submerged vaults. The Cult of the Scaly Abyss hunts the domain's ruined villages, abducting anyone who seeks shelter amid the wreckage. Those they find, they drag through secret paths beneath the waves to their ritual site under the island called Dagon's Claw.

Those who join the cult and participate in its induction rituals develop shark-like organs (see "Cult Dark Gifts").

Cult Rites

The cults of Innsmouth seek initiates to aid in their unfathomable works. Those who prove themselves reliable devotees gain access to the transformative power of strange gods.

Cult Renown

The cults of Innsmouth reward those who honor their obscene patrons. Use the guidance in the Dungeon Master's Guide to track characters' individual standing within Innsmouth's cults. Characters can gain renown with a cult by performing deeds such as those in the Innsmouth Cults Renown table.

Innsmouth Cults Renown

Deed	Renown Gained
Slaying an enemy cultist*	+1
Despoiling an enemy ritual site*	+1
Participating in a cult ritual*	+1
Ritual sacrifice of an enemy or magic item	+2
Retrieving alien devices	+2
Disrupting an enemy ritual	+3
Slaying the leader of an enemy cult	+5

*Renown for this deed can be gained only once per week.

Cult Dark Gifts

Characters who have a Renown Score of 10+ with an Innsmouth cult are honored as the chosen of the cult's patron. They are urged to take part in a ritual that inducts them into the cult and bestows on them a supernatural boon. A character who participates in such a ritual gains the Dark Gift (see chapter 1) noted on the Innsmouth Cults Dark Gifts table.

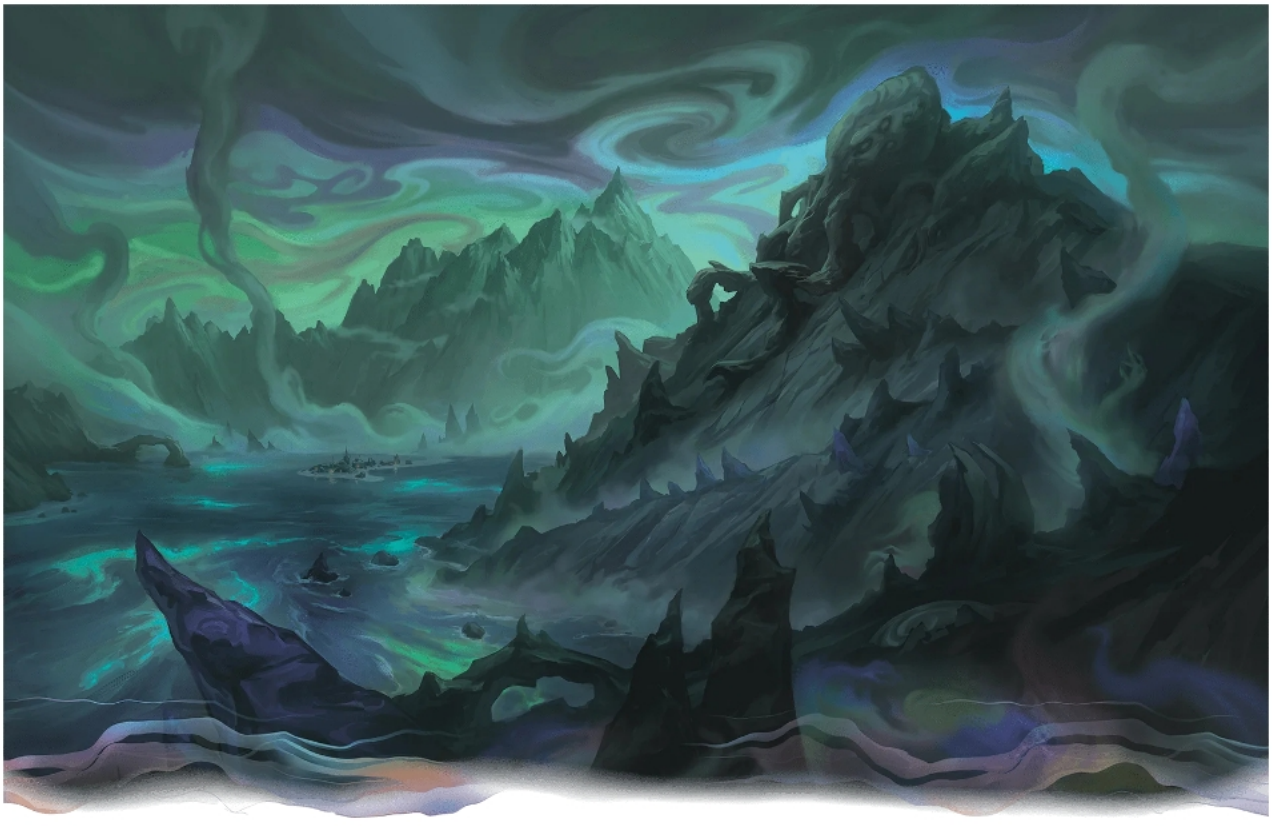
Innsmouth Cults Dark Gifts

Cult	Dark Gift
Cult of Chthonic Night	Gathered Whispers
Cult of the Drowning Wave	Symbiotic Being
Cult of the Heavenly Doom	Touch of Death
Cult of the Scaly Abyss	Aberrant Anatomy

These Dark Gifts include magical transformations associated with the cult's patron and its members. This magic can make it easier to navigate parts of the domain and bypass seals made by cult magic. This includes the binding sigils that mark Cthulhu's Vault. A character with one of these Dark Gifts can't gain another. A character with one of these gifts who leaves Innsmouth can choose to lose the Dark Gift or keep it.

Adventures in Innsmouth

Adventures in Innsmouth involve cults, degenerate rituals, nightmarish visions, and aberrant transformations. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.



Nightmarish monuments and reality-defying ruins cover the island called Innsmouth

David Frasheski

Corruptive Horror

The cults of Innsmouth are monstrous and dangerous, but not unwelcoming. Each seeks to bring a different terrifying cataclysm to Innsmouth. As characters interact with these cults and learn more of the island's secrets, bizarre dreams encourage the characters to accept the Dark Gifts the cults offer and balance rivalries to gain the might of each. Groups that engage with each cult might have strange adventures across Innsmouth and undergo bizarre transformations. Those that do will find themselves with the power to free Cthulhu from the island—and maybe themselves as well.

Dreams of Innsmouth

Cthulhu sends dreams to those in Innsmouth—and in realms beyond—that might help it escape its prison. These dreams include strange images spurring the dreamers to seek the cults of Innsmouth, gain their powers, and then dispel the sigils in Cthulhu's Vault. Dreams sent by Cthulhu might focus on the following topics and imagery:

Cult of the Chthonic Night: The village of Innsmouth, the Graven Peak, desiccated fish, tentacles

Cult of the Drowning Wave: The Eyes of Olhydra, shipwrecks, tidal waves, three eyes underwater

Cult of the Heavenly Doom: The peaks of Innsmouth, corpses in space, monoliths, whirling stars

Cult of the Scaly Abyss: Dagon's Claws, deep-sea predators, sharks eating sharks, undersea ruins

Cthulhu's Vault: The Cleft of Dreams, the Drowned Colossus, dark passages, strange sigils

Any of these dreams might end with a vision of the Mists parting and the characters' home or a similarly tantalizing location appearing beyond.

Old One's Bargain

Cthulhu's dream-messages tempt characters to release the entity to win their own escape from its domain. Whether Cthulhu can or will fulfill this offer is up to you, but the characters might not wish to jeopardize reality to escape. In the course of exploring Innsmouth, they can find the writings of obsessed wizards and cult heresies that suggest the following secrets:

Cthulhu's Disruption. Cthulhu's power is such that, should someone release it, the Mists around Innsmouth would open and those in the domain could escape.

Cthulhu's Might. Cthulhu wouldn't emerge from its prison at full strength. For approximately one hour after its release, heroes might force Cthulhu back into its prison, should they subject the terror to potent magic such as Imprisonment or Wish, or a blow powerful enough to disrupt its physical form, like a powerful lightning strike, a massive explosion, or a strike from a large sailing ship.

Elaborate on these possibilities as characters explore Innsmouth, and encourage them to believe they might be able to outwit a Great Old One.

Otherworldly Relics

The monsters noted in the "Cosmic Horror" section of chapter 4 make appropriate inhabitants of the ruins and vaults of Innsmouth. These beings often possess evidence of alien technologies and cultures. Innsmouth's cults covet such relics. Roll on or choose a result from the Alien Relics table to inspire what otherworldly beings might possess.

Alien Relics

1d6	The Alien Being Possesses...
1	A crystalline wand with a monstrous face.
2	A faintly glowing trapezohedron.
3	A jade amulet shaped like a sphinx.
4	A metallic cluster of globes and half globes.
5	An oversize, pattern-etched silver key.
6	A preserved brain in a glass cylinder.

Innsmouth Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Innsmouth involve warring cults, unfathomable beings, and bizarre transformations. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–2. The characters wash up on Innsmouth island and shelter in the village. They experience strange dreams. Soon after, they encounter cultists who seek to initiate them and others who seek to sacrifice them. The characters gain allies among one of the island's cults.

Levels 3–5. The allied cult sends the characters to disrupt other cults and retrieve relics from the ruins. In return, the cult offers insights into the characters' dreams and suggests ways to escape the island. After proving their worth, a character receives the cult's Dark Gift (see "Cult Rites").

Levels 6–16. Led by their dreams and duplicitous cult members, the characters move from cult to cult, gaining influence by delving into ruins and strange vaults. In doing so, they collect Dark Gifts, as well as hints about Cthulhu's Vault and ways to undermine the Great Old One (see "Old One's Bargain").

Levels 17–20. After collecting a Dark Gift from each cult, the characters follow a treacherous path through the Vaults to Cthulhu's Vault. There, they can risk releasing Cthulhu to escape the island.

Vault of the Elder

Adventure for Level 11 Characters

Situation. Cult lore tells of a vault that is home to a wise elder who knows the secrets of escaping the island.

Hook. A cult leader shares directions to the vault but wants one of the strange relics the elder is said to hoard.

Map 2.18: Cthulhu's Vault

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Map 2.18: Cthulhu's Vault Surroundings

Mike Schley

Player Version

Mike Schley

Map 2.18: Wreck of the Providence

Mike Schley

Encounters

The adventure uses map 2.18 and consists of these encounters:

Vault Ambush. On the way to the vault, two Cult Fanatics and a Fiend Cultist (or another enemy cultist selected from those mentioned in "Cults of Innsmouth") ambush the characters.

Frigid Spires. The Vault of the Elder lies in a realm of icy mountains gripped by extreme cold (see "Environmental Effects" in the Dungeon Master's Guide). The towers of a gravity-defying stone city protrude from one mountain.

Hollow City. The characters find the city filled with narrow ramps and abandoned, tubelike structures etched with eerie hieroglyphs. Of particular note is an out-of-place collection of tents and a templelike building.

Encampment. Brown mold covers the tents (see chapter 3 of the Dungeon Master's Guide). If the characters remove the mold, they find five cultists frozen inside the tents, wrapped in blankets. One wears a Ring of Mind Shielding.

Elder Temple. The templelike building bears carvings depicting five-winged beings fighting giant, fungus-like insects. Through the temple lies a path leading deeper into the mountain—and defended by a Shoggoth (see chapter 5).

Frozen Warning. Ice encrusts the walls of the deeper temple, covering more strange carvings. Etched into the ice over a depiction of another five-winged creature is a warning in Common: "Beware the Elder."

Elder's Reliquary. The passage ends in a chamber with four pillars of ice. Perched on one is a Hostile Elder Thing (see chapter 5).

Ice Tombs. The pillars of ice each hold a shadowy shape. These pillars have AC 14, HP 20, Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage, and Vulnerability to Fire damage. The pillars contain the following:

Alien Relic. The first pillar contains a strange relic. Roll on the "Alien Relics" table earlier in this chapter to determine what it is.

Mi-Go. Two pillars contain Mi-Go (see chapter 5), which awake 1 round after being freed.

Vault Map. A hieroglyph-etched slab in the final pillar charts a route from Innsmouth's surface to Cthulhu's Vault. It also provides information from the "Old One's Bargain" section. However, only someone with the Dark Gift of the Cult of Heavenly Doom can decipher its alien language.

Kalakeri

Domain of Betrayal and Revenge

Darklord: Ramya Vasavadan

Adventure Genres: Gothic horror and dark fantasy

Hallmarks: Monstrous leaders, family intrigue, war-torn nation

Mist Talismans: Rusted tulwar, shield with a wyvern-and-lotus emblem, a polished skull

Aligned Tarokka Card: Avenger

Opposed Tarokka Card: Artifact

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Deceptively beautiful, Kalakeri is a land of verdant rainforests and a web of rivers and lakes known as the Backwaters. At the height of its prosperity, Kalakeri was a robust center of art, commerce, and religion, with merchants spreading wild tales of the land, using fanciful names such as Sri Raji and the Steaming Lands. Now Kalakeri is a conflict-torn shadow of its past glory. The remnants of the Vasavadan dynasty—three heirs transformed into monsters by their depravity and hatred—trap the land in an endless cycle of war.

The people of Kalakeri live in fear of Maharani Ramya Vasavadan, the domain's Darklord, as well as her treacherous siblings, Arijani and Reeva. The Darklord's curse manifests both in her deathless desire to rule Kalakeri and in her siblings' endless rebellions. Both sides escalate their atrocities against one another, drawing the powerful and the innocent alike into their squabbles. As the maharani's siblings court allies, the Darklord's forces hunt and execute renegades, adding skulls to the grim Tower of Traitors.

Domain Features

Kalakeri is known for the following features:

Factions in Conflict. Two factions claim Kalakeri's Sapphire Throne: the soldiers and loyalists of Maharani Ramya Vasavadan, and the nobles and merchants who support the younger royal siblings, Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan.

Jadurai, a City at War. The vast city of Jadurai is Kalakeri's capital, the site of the royal palace, and a battlefield where factions struggle to claim or hold it as a symbol of rule.

The Backwaters. Rare creatures and extraordinary magical plants flourish in the Backwaters, the collective name for the wilderness away from Kalakeri's cities. Scattered refugee groups hide in the wilds and organize dangerous, desperate attacks on the Vasavadan factions.

Locations in Kalakeri

Tropical rainforests isolate Kalakeri's communities. While the domain's residents are adept at navigating these wildernesses, strangers often fall prey to the domain's myriad hazards and predators.

The capital of Jadurai is detailed below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Kalakeri Locations table.

Jadurai

Ancient structures adorned with the artistry of past dynasties stand alongside modern buildings in Kalakeri's capital, Jadurai. The city retains its splendor, but the conflict between the Vasavadan siblings takes an enormous toll as they struggle over the Cerulean Citadel, the nation's capitol, as well as the Sapphire Throne within. Sections of the city lie in ruins.

On the outskirts of Jadurai rises the Tower of Traitors. Rows of skulls taken from the Darklord's enemies fill depressions in this stone tower. Two skulls hold places of special prominence: the original human skulls of Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan. The Darklord's skeletal soldiers build the tower as part of her plan to rid Kalakeri of evil and receive the gods' blessings.

Map 2.19: Kalakeri

Marco Bernardini

Player Version

Marco Bernardini

Kalakeri Locations

Location	Description
Ashwagangha Mountains	The forbidden ruins of the accursed city of Bahru lie hidden somewhere in the Ashwagangha Mountains. A powerful evil force lies imprisoned there, attended by monstrous cultists.
Bay of Lost Lights	The villages of Kattachira and Grantha flank the Bay of Lost Lights, which is named for the will-o'-wisps that bob in and above it.
Drowned Altar	The sea boils around an ancient, submerged ruin called the Drowned Altar. With Kalakeri's upheaval, no one has performed the rites to placate what dwells in the deep.
Forest of the Still	Statues of helpless animals and terrified refugees alike decorate the quiet, basilisk-infested Forest of the Still. Some of the statues are said to be the remains of heroes from past ages.
Gharial Rivers	The villages of Banyan and Veena are renowned for their remarkable herbalists, but their secrets rely on plants guarded by the titanic crocodiles of the Gharial Rivers.
Island of the Naga	The eternal guardian nagas of the Isle of the Naga have a perfect memory of Kalakeri's lost secrets. Suspicious of strangers, the nagas test the worthiness of any who seek their knowledge.
Jalendu's Sanctuary	The stone giant guru Jalendu lives in his sanctuary and claims to know a path to religious enlightenment. Those who fail to prove their devotion to his teachings turn up petrified.
Meenakara	The shadows of people of Meenakara are disappearing, and the shadow-bereft soon sicken and die. Meenakara's people believe the cure lies in the Ashram of Niranjan.
Neelakurinji	Bandits overtook the village of Neelakurinji, claiming Arijani Vasavadan as their leader. In truth, they serve no one, opportunistically robbing those who fear disobeying the Vasavadan factions.
Silent Sitars	The giants who occupy the islands known as the Silent Sitars were cursed for offending the gods. Sound is magically suppressed on these isles, stifling the truths within the giants' music.
The Vochalams	Temples crown the Vochalam mountains. In one, a deity placed a treasure that grants wishes. In the other is a treasure that turns people into wyverns loyal to Kalakeri's ruler.

Ramya Vasavadan

Darklord Perpetually Denied Control

Camille Alquier

"*Are you loyal to your maharani? Or are you yet more rebel skulls to add to the Tower of Traitors?*"

— Ramya Vasavadan

Ramya Vasavadan desperately fights to claim and hold power over Kalakeri in a brutal cycle of victory and loss with her equally uncompromising siblings. Unlike most Darklords, Ramya struggles to control her domain, leading her to seek allies in opposing her siblings and their treacherous allies.

In her true form, Ramya is an undead horror, but illusions mask her monstrous appearance. Her true nature is revealed by her chilled skin and her reflection, which always appears withered and terrifying.

Although Ramya's siblings, Arijani and Reeva, aren't Darklords of Kalakeri, they motivate the rebellions in Kalakeri and Ramya's torments. This monstrous pair is detailed in "Arijani and Reeva."

Ramya Vasavadan

RHW p116

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
18	+15 (25)	190 (20d8 + 100)	30 ft.	15 (XP 13,000, or 15,000 in lair; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	14	+2	+7	**Dex**	20	+5	+5	**Con**	20	+5	+5
Int	12	+1	+1	**Wis**	16	+3	+8	**Cha**	18	+4	+4

Skills Perception +8, Persuasion +9

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Abyssal, Common

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Ramya dies, her body dissolves into mist, and she gains a new body in 1d10 weeks, reviving with all her Hit Points somewhere in Kalakeri.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Ramya fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ramya has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Marshal Undead. Undead creatures of Ramya's choice (excluding herself) in a 60-foot Emanation originating from her have Advantage on attack rolls and saving throws. She can't use this trait if she has the Incapacitated condition.

Actions

Multiattack. Ramya makes three Dread Blade attacks.

Dread Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) Necrotic damage.

Spellcasting. Ramya casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At will: Phantom Steed

1/day: Create Undead

Vengeful Fire (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point Ramya can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Fire damage plus 28 (8d6) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Bonus Actions

Illusory Disguise. Ramya casts Disguise Self using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. The spell lasts until Ramya drops to 80 Hit Points or fewer or uses her Vengeful Fire action. Intelligence (Investigation) checks to discern her true appearance are made with Disadvantage.

When the disguise ends, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from Ramya is subjected to the following effect. Wisdom Saving Throw: DC 17 (the target succeeds automatically if it is a Construct or an Undead). Failure: The target has the Frightened condition for 1 minute. While Frightened, the target has Disadvantage on saving throws.

Reactions

Parry. *Trigger:* Ramya is hit by a melee attack roll while holding a weapon. *Response:* Ramya adds 5 to her AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Ramya can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Ramya regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Dread Authority. Ramya casts Command, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. Ramya can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Lunge. Ramya moves up to half her Speed and makes one Dread Blade attack.

Words of Silence. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature Ramya can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Psychic damage, and the target is cursed until the end of its next turn. Until the curse ends, the target can't speak or cast spells with a Verbal component. *Success:* Half damage only.

Ramya's Tale

The Vasavadan dynasty has ruled Kalakeri since ancient times. Ramya Vasavadan was handpicked by her father to succeed him, but on the bleak day of his death, Ramya's brother, Arijani, declared himself the new maharaja.

Ramya refused to yield to her brother, and with her allies, she captured and prepared to execute him. But Ramya's sister, Reeva, counseled mercy. Instead, Ramya imprisoned Arijani and ascended as Kalakeri's maharani, Queen of Kings.

In the years that followed, Ramya ruled justly. But in the shadows, Reeva plotted with rebels, who eventually freed Arijani and spurred nobles across the nation to revolt.

Regretting her mercy, Ramya sent her army to crush the rebels and mercilessly execute the treacherous. Reeva and Arijani combated Ramya's superior forces with ambushes and deceptions. Once again exploiting Ramya's sympathies, the pair tricked Ramya, invaded the Cerulean Citadel, and executed their sister by strangling. With her final gasps, Ramya cursed her brother and sister, calling them bloodthirsty beasts. Soon after, a terrible monsoon struck Kalakeri, bringing with it the Mists.

The storm lashed Kalakeri for weeks. At its height, Ramya returned from the dead and called on those who had fallen in her service. Loyal in death, a corpse legion joined the revitalized maharani, besieged the Cerulean Citadel, and slaughtered Arijani and Reeva. Ramya then stole their skulls and built them into the foundations of what would become the Tower of Traitors.

Arijani and Reeva's plots didn't end with their lives. They too were reborn, transformed into monstrous reflections of their ravenous desires.

Now in the Land of the Mists, the conflict gripping Kalakeri continues, trapping the nation in an endless war and forcing its people to swear loyalty to monsters.

Ramya's Domain

While Ramya is in control of the Sapphire Throne, Kalakeri is altered by Ramya's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Ramya can close or open the borders to Kalakeri at will. While the borders are closed, the Mists surrounding Kalakeri sap the life of those within them. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there and isn't a Construct or an Undead must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Everlasting Army. A Medium or Small Humanoid slain in combat rises 24 hours later as a Wight under Ramya's control, unless the Humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

If Ramya dies or if her siblings control the Sapphire Throne, these effects end immediately.

Ramya's Lair

The Cerulean Citadel is Kalakeri's royal palace. It derives its name from the blue sandstone used in its construction. Control of the citadel and the Sapphire Throne within regularly passes between Ramya and her siblings.

Cerulean Citadel

Bas-reliefs adorn the palace, depicting the history, heroes, and legends of the kingdom. The site is depicted on map 2.20 and has the following features:

Domed Court. The central domed court houses the Sapphire Throne. It hosts guardians and treasures gathered by the paranoid Vasavadans. Towers guard the surrounding walls, which are accessible via bridges from the court's upper floors.

War-Torn Courtyards. Within the palace walls lie marble pavilions arranged among baths, ponds, and gardens. Some are intact, but sieges and repeated conflicts have ravaged others.

Adventures in Kalakeri

Adventures set in Kalakeri involve suspicion and power struggles. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Evidence of the endless conflict between the Vasavadan siblings lies rotting before the Cerulean Citadel

Miro Petrov

Horror in Kalakeri

Adventures in Kalakeri often include the following elements.

Arijani and Reeva

Ramya's rule is jeopardized by her siblings' pursuit of power. Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan promise their followers wealth and freedom, but in truth, their agendas serve only them. Ramya still loves her siblings, making her vulnerable to their promises and lies. So long as Ramya exists, the Dark Powers resurrect Arijani and Reeva as if they had Ramya's Darklord Restoration trait.

Arijani. Arijani is the charming face of resistance for all who oppose Ramya. Now a Rakshasa, gregarious Arijani has decadent tastes. When in control of the Cerulean Citadel, he hosts parties for Kalakeri's elite that conceal private feasts featuring obscene delicacies and mortal flesh.

Reeva. Reeva's adoration of Ramya gave way to jealousy when Ramya eclipsed her in their family's esteem. Now an Arcanaloth, Reeva uses insidious magic from beneath the Cerulean Citadel to summon fiends and manipulate foes from afar. Behind her back, many mockingly call Reeva "Inajira," her charismatic Arijani's opposite.

Renown in Kalakeri

You can track the characters' influence with Ramya's loyalist faction and her siblings' rebel faction, using the renown rules from the Dungeon Master's Guide to track the characters' standing with these groups. Characters might gain renown with either faction by performing missions such as these:

- Capturing or killing a rival agent
- Planting evidence that a rival committed a crime
- Conscripting a powerful ally for the faction
- Revealing the location of a rival's hold
- Revealing traitors within the faction

Anytime the characters complete a mission for either group, their Renown Score with that group increases by 1, but their Renown Score with the other group decreases by 1 (to a minimum of 0). After the first time characters gain renown with either faction, any faction the characters have a Renown Score of 0 with treat the characters as follows:

Loyalist Faction. Members of this faction are Hostile toward the characters. The faction sends troops of Wights or other Undead to capture the characters weekly.

Rebel Faction. Members of this faction are Hostile toward the characters. The faction sends Assassins or Wraiths under Reeva's command to kill the characters weekly.

Characters can gain renown with a faction they have a Renown Score of 0 with by presenting proof of an action that undermines the other group. Even if betrayed, the factions seek the party's aid, as they view the characters as useful pawns.

If the characters have a Renown Score of 5+ with either group, their deeds might benefit the faction enough for it to take control of Jadurai and claim the Sapphire Throne. The longer either faction controls the capital, the more extreme its reign becomes, its atrocities escalating week after week. The characters must balance aiding and opposing both factions to maintain equilibrium.

Kalakeri Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Kalakeri typically involve balancing the horrors committed by the Vasavadan factions. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–4. Agents from the rebel faction contact the characters, presenting Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan as misunderstood heroes seeking to overthrow a tyrant. They entreat the characters to save the heir of an allied noble family from a compound controlled by Ramya's Wight soldiers and return him to a hidden safe house.

Levels 5–8. The characters meet Arijani and Reeva in their disguises as charming human royals. They thank the characters for their aid and ask them to reclaim the shield of an ancient hero petrified in the Forest of the Still, hoping the shield will be a symbol of their right to rule. As the characters travel to the forest, a messenger delivers a request from Ramya to do the same. The characters must face Basilisks and the Wraiths of the petrified dead to recover the shield and then decide who to return it to.

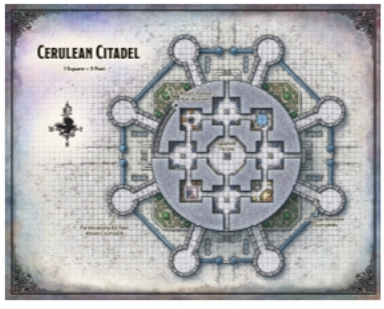
Levels 9–12. Arijani and Reeva plot to attack Jadurai to claim the Sapphire Throne and request the characters' help. Ramya's spies have informed her of this plot, and she also seeks the characters' aid. In the ensuing conflict, the characters might strike at any of the Vasavadan siblings.

Tower of Traitors

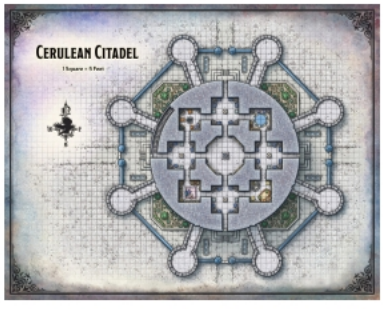
Adventure for Level 11 Characters

Situation. Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan seek to recover the skulls of their mortal bodies from the Tower of Traitors. They believe the skulls will grant them greater power.

Hook. Arijani or Reeva order the characters to recover two skulls from the Tower of Traitors but don't say who the skulls belong to. They offer to pay the party with 10,000 GP in gemstones and a Candle of Invocation.



Map 2.20: Cerulean Citadel



Player Version

Map 2.20: Tower of Traitors

Encounters

This adventure assumes you are tracking the characters' renown with Kalakeri's loyalist and rebel factions (see "Renown in Kalakeri" earlier in this section). It includes these encounters.

Stolen Skulls. The skulls Arijani and Reeva seek are from their own corpses, which were defiled by Ramya. The skulls are among hundreds in the Tower of Traitors. The pair don't reveal who the skulls belong to but insist they're vital to the rebel faction's allies. To aid in the search, the siblings give the characters two Spell Scrolls of Locate Object. However, they don't provide the characters with enough details for the spell to pinpoint the skulls.

Learning About the Skulls. The characters must learn three details about the skulls for them to be familiar enough to the characters that a spell like Locate Object can locate them. Characters can learn details in three ways:

Research. Characters who spend a day searching for rumors or investigating records in one of Kalakeri's settlements learn a detail by succeeding on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check or Intelligence (Investigation) check respectively.

Renown. A character can spend a day questioning non-Hostile members of a faction. After doing so, the characters learn a detail, but their Renown Score with that faction is reduced by 1. The group can do this only once.

Magic. The Legend Lore spell reveals one detail; each character can use this spell once.

Each time the party learns a detail about the skulls, reveal a portion of the story from the "Ramya's Tale" section, obscuring the names of the maharani and the traitors until the end.

Tower of Traitors. The Tower of Traitors is depicted on map 2.20 and is guarded by patrols of two Revenants and four Wights. If the characters have a Renown Score of 3+ with the loyalist faction, the undead are Indifferent and tell the party to move along—they fight only if characters linger for more than 5 minutes or remove a skull from the tower. If the characters have less renown with the loyalists, the undead are Hostile. A new patrol appears 2d6 rounds after a patrol is defeated.

Searching the Tower. The tower is composed of thousands of skulls, and the ones the rebels want can be found via magic such as the Locate Object spell. Once discovered, a skull can be removed in 1 minute using a sharp implement. When both skulls are freed, the hatred lurking in the skulls manifests as two Hostile Gallows Speakers (see chapter 5).

Loyalty or Treachery. The next time the characters rest, Arijani (Rakshasa) appears and demands the skulls. If the characters give him the skulls, he compensates them and the characters' Renown Score with the rebel faction increases by 4. If the characters refuse to give him the skulls, Arijani fights them. The party's Renown Score with the rebels decreases by 4 if Arijani is slain. Soon after, Ramya invites the characters to discuss future plans.

Regardless of how the adventure concludes, each character earns a bonus 4,100 XP.

Kartakass

Domain of Tarnished Dreams

Darklord: Harkon Lukas

Adventure Genres: Dark fantasy and gothic horror

Hallmarks: Hidden identities, dangerous performances, exploitative ambitions, werewolves

Mist Talismans: Handbill advertising remarkable performances, rustic woodcut of hunting wolves, wolf's tooth necklace

Aligned Tarokka Card: Swashbuckler

Opposed Tarokka Card: Beast

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Life in Kartakass feels staged and surreal, as every plant, beast, and person strives to prove their greatness. Trees and flowers erupt into bloom; songbirds sing themselves hoarse; and every local knows that dreams, fame, and immortal adulation are theirs should they prove worthy. And where talent and expertise fail, obsession and duplicity reign, leading to cycles of triumph, betrayal, and despair. Predators flourish in this land of unrealistic hopes, consuming passions, and vicious secrets.

With each full moon, the truth of Kartakass is exposed, as the domain's many werewolves and other lycanthropes indulge their hunger for dominance and blood. After the full moon passes, the idyllic facade returns. Locals don't speak of why most bar their doors and shutter their windows on the nights of the full moon, but they acknowledge that the path to greatness is messy.

Domain Features

Kartakass is known for the following features:

False Idylls. Kartakass is supernaturally picturesque and outwardly serene. Every season is strikingly beautiful, communities appear idyllic, and many animals are affected as if by the Awaken spell. This makes deceptions and violence all the more stark.

Meistersingers. Kartakass has no unified government. Each settlement is governed by a meistersinger, the acknowledged mayor and embodiment of local art. Meistersingers maintain creative rivalries with one another largely for show.

Theatricality. Settlements pride themselves on performative traditions, such as distinctive dress, traditional dances, or song stylings.

Wolves and Werewolves. Wolves roam the land freely, and Werewolves lurk in the domain's settlements. Residents seldom venture outside during the full moon, fearing the lycanthropes' hunger.

Locations in Kartakass

Kartakass is a land of rolling hills, light forests, clear lakes, and pastoral farmlands. Communities are welcoming and host frequent festivals. The settlements of Harmonia and Skald are detailed below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Kartakass Locations table.

Harmonia

Artists vie to perform at the town of Harmonia's popular Crystal Club, a members-only venue inside a cave that features a stage constructed from a massive geode. The club features dramatic decor and discerning clientele. Rumors say that performers who fail to impress are exiled. The bloodier truth is that the club restricts membership to lycanthropes. Talented artists gain the curse and join their ranks, while the mediocre get devoured.

Skald

The largest community in Kartakass, Skald is a bustling hub of commerce and creativity. The lure of overnight celebrity and fawning crowds attracts the ambitious. Yet behind the facade of creativity and freethinking, business owners and celebrities prey on creativity, while performers struggle viciously over paltry opportunities. Vice, criminality, dark bargains, and supernatural predators flourish amid Skald's many stages and frequent festivals. Among Skald's most popular venues is the Old Kartakan Inn and Taverna, owned by the performer and Darklord Harkon Lukas.

Map 2.21: Kartakass

Marco Bernardini

Player Version

Marco Bernardini

Kartakass Locations

Location	Description
Argent Falls Conservatory	Performers flock to a bardic college atop the Argent Falls. Caverns behind the falls bear rich silver deposits but are haunted by Banshees—the souls of failed performers.
The Catacombs	Violent goblins lurk amid mazelike canyons called the Catacombs. Here, the goblin gladiator Nym Pymplee hosts fighting tournaments, with victors winning treasures from distant domains.
Cavea Plains	The Cavea Plains' acoustics carry voices over great distances. Any speech above a whisper might attract the attention of wolves.
Cesca's Vantage	On the night of a full moon, a tarokka-reading wolf appears atop Cesca's Vantage. She produces crimson cards from any corpse she is offered, and her readings are never wrong.
Cortton	A plague has taken root in Cortton. The town's residents cake heavy makeup and garish blush on their faces, desperate to convince themselves and others that they're uninfected.

Location	Description
Emherst	Every "resident" of Emherst is an in-character improvisational actor. They live in the Understage, an underground network of backstages, and they never interrupt performances.
Goblyn Graves	Undead goblinoids often emerge from the Goblyn Graves, the former lair of Radaga, an undead witch said to possess powerful magic treasures.
House of Illusions	This fun house of visual illusions is run by Jack Bequick: a vampire cursed with eternal invisibility and a twisted sense of humor.
Medria	Several dramatic-effects artists call the fishing village of Medria home. Colorful explosions and wandering puppets are commonplace.
Point Hallucination	The Mists often surge over Lake Variatio to deposit newcomers at the rickety quay known as Point Hallucination, where traveling merchants and performers eagerly greet them.
Wildersung Wood	At twilight, a sourceless chorus drifts through these woods. Those who don't sing along risk losing their lives, while those who discover the last verse discover a hidden sanctuary.

Harkon Lukas

Darklord Who Preys on Talent

Igor Krstic

"I must say, your skill is unlike any I've ever seen. The name's Harkon. I'm sure you've heard of me."

— Harkon Lukas

The charming werewolf Harkon Lukas manipulates those around him to satisfy his narcissistic needs for adulation and control. Endlessly seeking fame, Harkon travels widely, earning applause and accolades. Yet, whenever he returns to a town he's performed in, he finds he's been forgotten. Lukas believes he needs just the right song or inspiration to make himself unforgettable. To that end, he searches for talented protégés, cultivating their skills, then stealing their work. He ensures their loyalty by gifting them copies of his cursed wolf-tooth necklace, Harkon's Bite, or by transforming them into werewolves. He then manipulates these victims into believing only he will accept them.

Harkon wears a signature wide-brimmed hat and wolf-tooth necklace, and he carries a violin he calls Bleeding Heart. He uses flattery to charm those he takes an interest in. A skilled artist who declines the offer to become his protégé often earns his obsession. The Darklord might go to any extreme to claim such performers' talents as his own.

Harkon Lukas

RHW p124

Medium Monstrosity (Lycanthrope), Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+14 (24)	187 (22d8 + 88)	30 ft., 40 ft. (hybrid form only), 50 ft. (dire wolf form only)	14 (XP 11,500, or 13,000 in lair; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	21	+5	+5	**Dex**	18	+4	+4	**Con**	19	+4	+9
Int	14	+2	+2	**Wis**	16	+3	+8	**Cha**	19	+4	+4

Skills Perception +8, Performance +9, Stealth +9

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Gear Violin

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common (can't speak in dire wolf form)

Traits

Blood Frenzy. Harkon has Advantage on attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its Hit Points.

Darklord Restoration. If Harkon dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Kartakass.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Harkon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Regeneration. Harkon gains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of his turns if he has at least 1 Hit Point. If Harkon takes Radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Harkon makes two Swipe attacks. He can replace one attack with (A) Bite or (B) Enthralling Performance.

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it is subjected to the following effect: *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17. *Failure:* The target is cursed. If the cursed target drops to 0 Hit Points, it instead becomes a Werewolf under the DM's control and has 50 Hit Points. The curse can't be removed until Harkon dies. *Success:* The target is immune to Harkon's curse for 24 hours.

Swipe (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Enthralling Performance (Humanoid Form Only). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from Harkon. *Failure:* The target has the Charmed condition for 1 hour or until it takes damage.

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. Harkon shape-shifts into a Large dire wolf-humanoid hybrid or a Large dire wolf, or he returns to his true humanoid form. His game statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Harkon can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Harkon regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Crushing Insult. Harkon uses Shape-Shift to return to his humanoid form, then uses the following effect. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature of Harkon's choice that he can see within 30 feet of himself (creatures Charmed by Harkon automatically fail this save). *Failure:* 16 (3d10) Psychic damage. *Failure or Success:* Harkon can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Pounce. Harkon moves up to half his Speed and makes one Swipe attack.

Surprise Bite. Harkon uses Shape-Shift to turn into his hybrid or dire wolf form and then makes one Bite attack. Harkon can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Regional Effects

Kartakass is altered by Harkon's presence, creating the following effects:

Beast Spies. From dawn until dusk, Tiny Beasts in the domain magically gain the ability to understand Common and can communicate telepathically with other Beasts and Monstrosities.

Children of the Night. Harkon exerts influence over the animals of his domain. From dusk until dawn, Medium or smaller Beasts within 1 miles of Harkon have the Charmed condition. If Harkon pleases, these animals become Hostile to creatures other than Harkon and his allies.

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Harkon can close or open the borders to Kartakass at will. While the borders are closed, a strange melody fills the Mists surrounding Kartakass. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in them must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or it has the Unconscious condition for 1d6 hours, then awakes within sight of the town of Harmonia in Kartakass. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

If Harkon dies, these effects end immediately.

Harkon's Tale

Harkon Lukas weaves numerous self-aggrandizing tales of his origins. Among them, Harkon tells of being spurned for his ambitions by the werewolves that raised him. Through talent and sacrifice, he became a legendary performer, and people flocked to bask in his remarkable presence.

Eventually, the rulers of Harkon's homeland realized the threat posed by Harkon's growing fame. Officials tried to imprison him for invented crimes, but Harkon's fans defended him. When royal agents came for him, Harkon feigned his death, and his followers revolted. When outraged masses bearing Harkon's coffin besieged the royal palace, Harkon ended his ploy. He burst from his crimson coffin in wolf form and devoured the land's monarch. Drenched in blood, the "resurrected" Harkon returned to his human form and donned the monarch's crown amid the cheers of his deluded followers. Yet before Harkon's reign could begin, the Mists rose around him. When they cleared, Harkon found himself in an unfamiliar land called Kartakass.

Harkon's Domain

Kartakass is altered by Harkon's presence, creating the following effects:

Beast Spies. From dawn until dusk, Tiny Beasts in the domain magically gain the ability to understand Common and can communicate telepathically with other Beasts and Monstrosities.

Children of the Night. Harkon exerts influence over the animals of his domain. From dusk until dawn, Medium or smaller Beasts within 1 miles of Harkon have the Charmed condition. If Harkon pleases, these animals become Hostile to creatures other than Harkon and his allies.

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Harkon can close or open the borders to Kartakass at will. While the borders are closed, a strange melody fills the Mists surrounding Kartakass. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in them must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or it has the Unconscious condition for 1d6 hours, then awakes within sight of the town of Harmonia in Kartakass. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

If Harkon dies, these effects end immediately.

Harkon's Lair

The Darklord owns a tavern in Skald called the Old Kartakan Inn and Taverna. The inn occupies a small island on the Sing Song River. Nightly, Harkon Lukas or artists under his tutelage perform there.

Old Kartakan Inn and Taverna

Welcoming and rustic, the Old Kartakan features subtle wolf-themed decor. The site is depicted on map 2.22 and has the following features:

Bedrooms. The inn's rooms are insulated to block the sounds of performances and maulings alike.

Harkon Lukas's Room. Several secret doors and a trapdoor lead to Harkon's tower bedroom, where he hides evidence of his own uninspired music and trophies from past victims.

Secret Doors and Chambers. The inn is riddled with secret spaces to spy into other chambers, hide bodies, or indulge in bestial meals.

Taproom. Among the drinks the taverna offers is Meekulbrau, a blood-red berry wine that soothes the throat and improves vocal performances.

Adventures in Kartakass

Adventures set in Kartakass involve art, werewolves, and sinister ambitions. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Cynthia Sheppard

"*Explain why you have interrupted my reverie, or I will turn your waking hours into nightmares.*"

— Lord Soth

Lord Loren Soth seethes within a realm that mocks and frustrates him. Having known the rigid standards of knighthood and warfare, Soth finds Sithicus empty and chaotic, his people apathetic and undisciplined. The elven beauty that once captivated him lies ruined, the land burns with the flames of Krynn's Cataclysm, and the realm's shadows remind Soth of his past failures. Worse, no worthy foes exist to challenge him. So Soth broods on his throne in Nedragaard Keep, haunted by banshees that sing the tale of his disgrace and by rotted, undead copies of the knights who once served him.

Lord Soth cares nothing for his domain. But should noteworthy threats or remarkable individuals appear, he seeks to crush or enlist them. The only exception is the spirit of his treacherous former ally, Caradoc. Soth's undead servants and his werebadger seneschal, Azrael Dax, scour the land for the elusive ghost.

Soth shares his imprisonment in Sithicus with all in the domain by keeping its borders perpetually closed. Only those who rouse him to activity or invade Nedragaard Keep might convince him to let them escape. This risks provoking the mighty death knight's wrath, but Soth still thinks of himself as a true knight—he might assist those who present themselves as honorable warriors or show knowledge of his home (see "Influencing Lord Soth").

Lord Soth of Sithicus

RHW p158

Medium Undead, Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
18	+6 (16)	228 (24d8 + 120)	30 ft.	19 (XP 22,000, or 25,000 in lair; PB +6)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+6	**Dex**	11	+0	+6	**Con**	20	+5	+5
Int	12	+1	+1	**Wis**	16	+3	+9	**Cha**	20	+5	+11

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Infernal

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Lord Soth dies, he revives with all his Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Sithicus.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Lord Soth fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Lord Soth has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Marshal Undead. Undead creatures of Lord Soth's choice (excluding himself) in a 60-foot Emanation originating from him have Advantage on attack rolls and saving throws. Lord Soth can't use this trait if he has the Incapacitated condition.

Actions

Multiattack. Lord Soth makes three Forsaken Brand attacks.

Forsaken Brand. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) Slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) Necrotic damage.

Cataclysmic Fire (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point Lord Soth can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 24 (7d6) Fire damage plus 24 (7d6) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Face of Death (1/Day). *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 60-foot Emanation originating from Lord Soth. *Failure:* 22 (4d10) Psychic damage, and the creature has the Frightened condition. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* If this damage reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, the target dies.

Bonus Actions

Commanding Magic (3/Day). Lord Soth casts Dispel Magic, Hold Person, or Banishment (level 5 version), using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19).

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Lord can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Lord regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Punish. Lord Soth moves up to half his Speed, and he makes one Forsaken Brand attack.

Soth's Command. Lord Soth casts Command (level 3 version), using the same spellcasting ability as Commanding Magic. Lord Soth can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Regional Effects

Sithicus is altered by Lord Soth's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Lord Soth can close or open the borders to Sithicus. While the borders are closed, purple flames fill the Mists surrounding Sithicus. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 5 (1d10) Fire damage plus 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage.

Fearless Soldiers. Undead allies of Lord Soth have Immunity to the Frightened condition.

Guilt of Sithicus. Few sleep soundly in Sithicus. Whenever a creature other than Lord Soth and his allies finishes a Long Rest in the domain, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level.

If Lord Soth dies, these effects end immediately.

Villain of Two Worlds

Lord Soth features in adventures in both the Dragonlance and Ravenloft campaign settings. If you want to give Soth a unique relationship to the Domains of Dread, consider these possibilities:

- The nature of Soth's curse creates aspects of the death knight in both Krynn and Sithicus. When Soth broods in his fortress in Krynn, he remains active in Sithicus. When the evil god, Takhisis, calls for his service on Krynn, Soth enters a magical torpor in his fortress in Sithicus.
- Soth traveled from Krynn to Sithicus and is destined to return. If he leaves Sithicus, the domain might be destroyed, or a villain like Inza Kulchevich might take over.
- Soth was trapped in Sithicus, escaped, and was trapped again, perpetuating a cycle of despair.

Soth's story and where characters encounter him are for you to detail in your adventures.

Lord Soth's Tale

Lord Soth was given a quest to save the people of his world, Krynn, from the wrath of the gods. Possessed by baseless paranoia and possessiveness of his elf wife, Soth forsook that quest, and the world was devastated in a great Cataclysm. In punishment, Soth was resurrected as a death knight and, for centuries, brooded on his disgrace in the charred ruins of his fortress, Dargaard Keep.

When the evil god Takhisis whispered to Soth, promising to restore his glory and avenge him against the heroic knights who banished him long ago, Soth answered and served Takhisis. During this time, he called on his undead servants, including the ghost of the knight Caradoc. Seeking to forge a new knighthood of loyal dead, Soth became obsessed with Dragon Highlord Kitiara Uth Matar and charged Caradoc with claiming her soul. When Kitiara died in battle, Caradoc refused to capture her spirit unless Soth bargained with Takhisis to restore Caradoc to life. Enraged, Soth tried to destroy Caradoc as the Mists rose around them.

When the Mists faded, Soth found himself in the domain of Barovia. For a time, he found an ally in Count Strahd von Zarovich, but the two villains couldn't abide one another for long. Soth eventually pursued rumors of his treacherous servant, Caradoc, into the Mists. When the Mists parted again, the domain of Sithicus spread before him.

Lord Soth's Domain

Sithicus is altered by Lord Soth's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in his domain, Lord Soth can close or open the borders to Sithicus. While the borders are closed, purple flames fill the Mists surrounding Sithicus. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 5 (1d10) Fire damage plus 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage.

Fearless Soldiers. Undead allies of Lord Soth have Immunity to the Frightened condition.

Guilt of Sithicus. Few sleep soundly in Sithicus. Whenever a creature other than Lord Soth and his allies finishes a Long Rest in the domain, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level.

If Lord Soth dies, these effects end immediately.

Nedragaard Keep

Titus Lunter

Lord Soth rules from Nedragaard Keep, a twisted, copy of his accursed fortress on Krynn, Dargaard Keep. Nedragaard Keep grows and withers over time like a living thing. Undead soldiers patrolling the keep regularly forget their duties or collapse into lifelessness. The disorder within the rigid death knight's fortress endlessly frustrates Lord Soth.

Nedragaard Keep

Nedragaard Keep is a towerlike fortress of crumbling, flame-scarred stone. Prominent locations in the keep are depicted on map 2.31 and have the following features:

Gatehouse. Undead soldiers guard the gates to Nedragaard Keep, demanding to know trespassers' identities. Those who identify themselves with the proper passphrase, such as "a seeker of the rose" or "a servant of Nightlund's lord," are admitted. Stairs beyond the gate climb several floors to the top of the keep's walls.

Garden. Gardens on the keep's second floor are overgrown with thorny plants—use the rules for razorvine from the Dungeon Master's Guide. From here spread massive vines that bloom with black roses and strangle the entire castle.

Throne Room. High in the keep is Soth's throne room. Here Lord Soth spends much of his time dwelling on failures and twisted fantasies. Thirteen Banshees haunt the keep, and at any time, at least three linger here, singing of Soth's disgrace.

Adventures in Sithicus

Adventures set in Sithicus feature mysterious shadows, grim ruins, and strange foes from the warped memories of Lord Soth. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Horror in Sithicus

Adventures in Sithicus often include the following elements.

Cataclysmic Flames

Illusory violet flames burn across Sithicus—fires from the Cataclysm that devastated Krynn. Powerful shadows guard prominent, bonfire-like pillars of these flames. These shadows might use the stat blocks of any monster, but they resemble dragons, knights, and figures from Soth's past.

Whenever someone defeats one of these guardians, the flame it protected reveals an illusory scene from the Darklord's past before vanishing. Any character who witnesses such a scene learns something of Soth's history, the world he comes from, or the knighthood he once belonged to. One of the viewers then gains the Charm of the Black Rose (see "Supernatural Gifts" in the Dungeon Master's Guide for additional details).

Influencing Lord Soth

Lord Soth is typically Hostile to strangers, but characters can adjust his attitude to Indifferent by succeeding on a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. Soth might employ characters he deems worthy on quests, such as the hunt for the ghost Caradoc. Making a second successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check while offering Soth something he covets can improve Soth's attitude to Friendly for a short time, during which he might let others leave his domain.

Living Shadows

Shadows in Sithicus often act with a life of their own. Roll on or choose a result from the Shadows of Sithicus table to inspire these shapes' behavior.

Shadows of Sithicus

1d6	The Shadows Behave As...
1	An elf desperately offering a swaddled bundle.
2	Glimpses of skeletal warriors or horses.
3	Knights in battle or in the midst of a siege.
4	Peasants being consumed by shadowy flames.
5	Marching soldiers with dragon-like features.
6	Solemn elf priests being ambushed by ogres.

Sithicus Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Sithicus often involve trying to gain Lord Soth's favor and win escape from the domain. A campaign here might follow this outline:

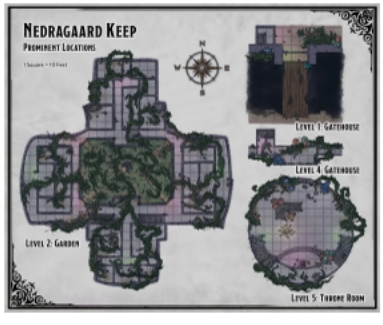
Levels 1–4. Azrael Dax, Lord Soth's werebadger seneschal, brusquely recruits the characters to hunt down deadly shadows. These shadows take the form of and behave as noble knights.

Level 5–9. Impressed by the characters, Azrael sends them to Inza Kulchevich to ask the witch to use her powers to find Lord Soth's elusive former servant, Caradoc. Inza can do this, but first she requires the characters to collect the cataclysmic flame from three ruins across the domain in a magical iron pendant. Each flame is guarded by a shadow creature that resembles some foe from Soth's twisted memories—like a lance-wielding Warrior Commander or a pompous Archpriest.

Levels 10–14. Inza uses the pendant to reveal that Caradoc's soul is trapped in a black sapphire that Azrael already possesses. The characters must recover the gem. They might then infiltrate Nedragaard Keep to offer it to Lord Soth. Soth is fickle though, and this approach might end in a confrontation with the death knight.

Map 2.31: Nedragaard Keep

NerdyMaps



Player Version

NerdyMaps

Shadow of the Black Rose

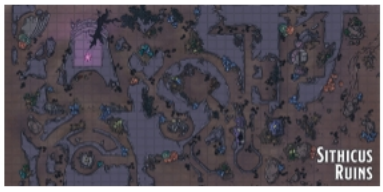
Adventure for Level 14 Characters

Situation. The characters seek to escape Sithicus or the Domains of Dread.

Hook. Inza Kulchevich (Medium, Neutral Evil Death Cultist) offers to tell the characters how to escape Sithicus if they recover a magical gem from Lord Soth's seneschal, Azrael Dax.

Map 2.31: Sithicus Ruins

NerdyMaps



Player Version

NerdyMaps

Encounters

The adventure consists of these encounters.

Inza's Quest. The witch Inza loathes Lord Soth. She knows he has tasked Azrael with recovering a magical gem that holds the spirit of the Darklord's treacherous former ally, the knight Caradoc. Inza gives the characters an iron pendant bearing an image of a rose that's missing its central gem. She asks them to follow Azrael to a ruin in the Misttop Mountains, where he hunts the missing gem, and recover it before him.

Inza's Secret. Inza doesn't share that she seeks to release Caradoc to provoke Soth into a conflict with the characters.

Searching the Ruins. The ruins where Azrael hunts for the gem appear on map 2.31. For every 10 minutes the characters are exploring, roll 1d6 on the table below for an encounter. For each previous encounter rolled on this table, add 1 to the result.

Encounters in the Ruins

1d6 + (n)	Encounter
1-2	Death Knight Aspirant and two Banshees
3-4	Two Relentless Nightmares
5	A Gulthias Blight covered in black roses
6	Kender Nosferatu (see below)
7	Shadow Highlord (see below)
8+	Azrael Dax (see below)

Kender Nosferatu. A morbidly whimsical pair of Vampire Nosferatu pesters the characters, hoping to be entertained. If the characters don't keep them amused, the nosferatu attack. Because these monsters were kender in life—mischievous folk from the world of Krynn—they are Small.

Shadow Highlord. A dragon rider made of shadows guards a pillar of illusory violet flame. It reflects one of Lord Soth's warped memories and uses the stat blocks of a Dullahan (see chapter 5) riding a Young Blue Dragon, followed by a withered Death's Head. The monsters are Hostile. If they're defeated, the nearby pillar of flames shows a scene of Lord Soth being knighted and grants a character the benefits noted in "Cataclysmic Flames." If you roll this encounter a second time, treat it as a meeting with Azrael Dax.

Azrael Dax. Azrael Dax is Lord Soth's dwarf seneschal and a murderous werebadger (use the Werebear stat block). Azrael and the six Strahd Skeletons (see chapter 5) attending him are Hostile. If reduced to 50 Hit Points or fewer, Azrael bargains for his life and offers the characters the black sapphire they're looking for, which he's been hiding from Soth for moons. After this, don't roll for more encounters in the ruins.

Repairing the Pendant. Place the black gem in Inza's iron amulet releases Caradoc (Neutral Evil Ghost). The arrogant creature is Indifferent to the characters. If they don't free Caradoc, Inza does when the group returns the gem and pendant to her.

Soth Appears. Three rounds after Caradoc is freed, Lord Soth of Sithicus (see earlier in this chapter) appears from the shadows. Soth fights Caradoc and mistakes the characters for the ghost's allies. A character might convince him otherwise—see "Influencing Lord Soth."

Escape. Characters who flee or defeat Lord Soth gain an additional 6,200 XP. Those who change the Darklord's attitude to Friendly or help him defeat Caradoc can convince him to let them leave Sithicus. Defeating Soth also causes the domain's borders to open. If the characters confront Inza about her method for leaving Sithicus, she cryptically explains that the only route to do so leads through Soth, encouraging them to seek the Darklord's aid or confront the death knight again.

Tepest

Domain of Nature's Cruel Secrets

Darklord: Mother Lorinda

Adventure Genre: Folk horror

Hallmarks: Fey bargains, rural cults, secret sacrifices, sinister festivals

Mist Talismans: Bloodstained farm implement, dried crown of white camellias, straw doll

Aligned Tarokka Card: Druid

Opposed Tarokka Card: Executioner

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

All is well in Tepest. Fields shimmer with bountiful harvests, and horned village children recite sing-song rhymes. But those who linger among this land's pastures and colorful cottages can't escape the feeling of being watched or the impression that strange forms move amid the fields. Locals dismiss such worries as the work of fey tricksters, but their smiles fail to mask the desperation in their eyes.

Brutality wears a welcoming face in Tepest, a truth embodied by the ancient hag Lorinda, who betrayed her coven in pursuit of adoration. Taking the guise of a deity called Mother, Lorinda adopted the village of Viktal, protecting its people from nature's whims so they can worship her even as they sacrifice themselves to feed her monstrous offspring. In the wilderness beyond, resentful fey watch and plot, offering cruel bargains to those who stray beyond Mother's sight. The people of Viktal do what they must to survive, using tradition to cloak their fear and complicity in a cycle of murder. Strangers become symbols of hope for Viktal's citizens—welcome alternatives to slaughtering their families in Mother's name.

Domain Features

Tepest is known for the following features:

Children of the Fey. Few children are born in Viktal. Would-be parents must bargain with Mother or the fey to bring them a child.

Fey Threats. Caves dot the land, connecting to depths where dangerous fey dwell. The people of Viktal fear them and blame them for every ill.

The Last Village. Viktal is the only community in Tepest. The others displeased Mother and suffered terrible fates.

Mother. Viktal's residents devoutly follow the optimistic faith of the nature deity called Mother.

Mother's Minders. Mother's most zealous faithful are called Mother's Minders. These devotees sacrifice their left eyes to Mother to show their faith.

The Tithe. Viktal's festivals include a fertility celebration called the Tithe that occurs once a season.

Locations in Tepest

The valley of Tepest is rocky, ill-suited to farming, and plagued by dangerous fey. Nevertheless, those who worship Mother are protected from the worst of the land's dangers. Mother's Sight and Viktal are detailed below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Tepest Locations table.

Mother's Sight

A mile outside Viktal, in a field apart from the surrounding farms, stands Mother's Sight: an array of rune-etched standing stones. These stones rise as tall as thirty feet, and several have pieces that defy gravity. Within the central and largest stone floats a disk reminiscent of a great eye.

Here the people come to worship, celebrate, and sacrifice. Colorful crafts adorn long tables, where the villagers play games and feast in celebration of Mother's bounty. Meals here are tasty, and guests are encouraged to eat and drink beyond their fill.

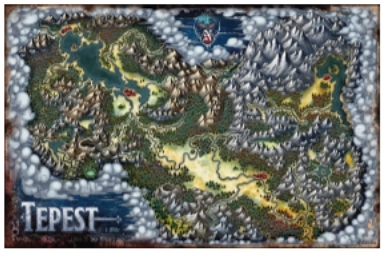
During rituals here, Viktal's community leaders give thanks to Mother before a dramatic fire surrounded by an eight-foot scaffold. (See "The Tithe" adventure for additional details.)

Viktal

Mother ensures peace in Viktal. The village consists of a few dozen cottages, a market square, and an inn on the banks of Lake Kronov. Wicker scarecrows guard the rich fields blessed by Mother, and friendly people go about their daily lives. Cheery villagers welcome visitors, show them hospitality, and demonstrate interest in their stories.

Map 2.32: Tepest

Jared Blando



Player Version

Jared Blando

Tepest Locations

Location	Description
Arkenheights	Mysterious valleys hide amid the forested Arkenheights mountains. Each is home to territorial fey who know the strange histories and mystical properties that linger in each.
Blackroot	A gigantic evil Treant called Blackroot roots amid the stone circles of an ancient order of druids. Blackroot hoards the druids' magic and protects its glade with its deadly saplings.
Briggdarrow	This ruined village of Briggdarrow is overgrown by a toxic, vision-inducing fungus. Eerie fungal beings emerge from the ruins by night to spread the infestation beyond the village.
Cas Island	A ruined fortress covers most of Cas Island. Within it lies a mysterious magical relic, but the waters around the island are guarded by a notorious, crocodilian lake monster, the Avanc.
The Cauldron	A fey witch drowned in this pool long ago. Now, any corpse bathed in its magical waters returns to life—but the spirit inhabiting the body never matches the original owner's.
Goblinwood	People-eating goblins lurk in the Goblinwood. They attack trespassers, but a curse affecting the goblins prevents them from seeing anyone wearing a cap of a certain color.
Kellee	The walled village of Kellee once worshipped Mother, but something went wrong. Now, Lorinda's forsaken followers haunt the place, and neither she nor her current worshippers dare approach.
The Lost Court	By day, this idyllic valley is serene and filled with friendly animals. At night, the ground turns to mud and brambles, from which rise the transformed victims of fey curses.
Mount Arak	Beneath Mount Arak lies a hidden realm of the fey. The goodly Queen Maeve and wicked Prince Loht jointly rule their people. The fey resent the surface folk for ancient slights.
Nobody's Inn	Fey creatures avoid this sturdy, welcoming Nobody's Inn. Few travel so far from Viktal, but those who do are welcomed by Bryonna, the inn's gregarious but unnerving skeleton proprietor.
Seer's Glass	The mountain lake called Seer's Glass has prophetic powers. Those who gaze on their reflection in it see their past by day and their future by night.

Mother Lorinda

Darklord Who Demands Adoration

Brian Valenzuela

"*What precocious moppets you are! Little ones who show Mother love get rewarded, but bad children get punished. Which sorts of tots are you?*"

— Mother Lorinda

Mother Lorinda desires a family over all else, not realizing she's destroyed every family she's ever had. A creator of monstrosities, this ancient green hag obsesses over unnatural maternalistic pursuits.

Over generations, Tepest's villagers have come to view Lorinda not as a powerful witch, but as a god of the land and fertility called Mother. Lorinda doesn't dissuade her fragile mortal followers from their baseless cult practices. The villagers provide willing sacrifices for the hag's flawed magical attempts to create life, and their adoration gradually soothes the violent, magical outbursts that follow her failures.

Lorinda's walking tower of bones, the Gurgyl, ranges across Tepest. Those who seek her here find a distracted but deceptively cunning hag clinging to grotesque dolls of her family. She laments the loss of her sisters, Laveeda and Leticia, never acknowledging that they remain alive as her prisoners. She often speaks of her daughter, Laoirse (pronounced "LUR-shuh")—the name she uses over and over again for each of her monstrous creations.

When Lorinda visits Viktal, she appears in her illusory guise as Mother, an ancient, powerful woman wearing a mothlike cloak and bearing a branch with burning limbs. She calls on the people to prove their love for her through sacrifice, whether of food and crafts, their left eyes, or their lives. Sometimes her arrival is sudden and terrifying, such as when she magically appears to crawl from one of her followers' empty eye sockets.

Lorinda seeks new ways to create a permanent family. This might involve great sacrifices, stolen fey magic, strange adoptions, or all manner of supernatural bargains.

Mother Lorinda

RHW p166

Medium Fey, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
18	+7 (17)	105 (14d8 + 42)	30 ft., Swim 30 ft.	8 (XP 3,900, or 5,000 in lair; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+7	**Dex**	13	+1	+4	**Con**	16	+3	+6
Int	13	+1	+1	**Wis**	17	+3	+6	**Cha**	15	+2	+2

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +5, Perception +6, Stealth +4

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Traits

Amphibious. Lorinda can breathe air and water.

Darklord Restoration. If Lorinda dies, she revives with all her Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Tepest.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Lorinda fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Mimicry. Lorinda can mimic noises and animal sounds. A creature that hears the mimicry can tell it is an imitation only with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Multiattack. Lorinda makes two Mother's Brand attacks.

Mother's Brand. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) Fire damage.

Spellcasting. Lorinda casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks):

At will: Charm Person, Dancing Lights, Disguise Self (24-hour duration), Invisibility (self only, and Lorinda leaves no tracks while Invisible), Minor Illusion, Ray of Sickness (level 3 version)

1/day each: Augury, Blight, Plant Growth, Scrying, Unseen Servant

Bonus Actions

Mother's Visage (1/Day). Lorinda shape-shifts into Mother, a deity revered by the people of Tepest, for 8 hours. Her game statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

While in the form of Mother, Lorinda can use Spellcasting to cast Charm Person as a Bonus Action.

Lorinda reverts to her true form if she drops to 50 Hit Points or fewer.

When Lorinda reverts to her true form, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from Lorinda is subjected to the following effect. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 14 (the target succeeds automatically if it is a Construct or an Undead). *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition for 1 minute. While Frightened, the target has Disadvantage on saving throws.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the mother lorinda can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The mother lorinda regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Brand. Lorinda teleports to an unoccupied space she can see within 30 feet and can make one Mother's Brand attack.

Overwhelming Presence. Lorinda casts Slow, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. Lorinda can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Regional Effects

Tepest is altered by Lorinda's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Mother Lorinda can close or open the borders to Tepest at will. While the borders are closed, a violent storm fills the Mists surrounding Tepest. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 2d8 Lightning damage and be pushed up to 30 feet straight toward Tepest. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Mother's Watchers. Creatures that have sacrificed an eye to Mother can take a Magic action and pray to her. When they do so, Lorinda can perceive through the creature's senses as well as her own until the end of the creature's next turn. When perceiving through a creature's senses, Lorinda benefits from any special senses it has.

Sun and Storms. While in Tepest, Lorinda can cast Control Weather, requiring no Material components and using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. When casting the spell this way, Lorinda can control the weather within 5 miles of herself, regardless of whether she is inside or outside.

If Lorinda dies, these effects end immediately.

Mother Lorinda's Tale

The sisters Lorinda, Laveeda, and Leticia Mindefisk lived desperate lives at the wooded edge of a terrible land. Their brutish family claimed the girls were unnatural fey in disguise and forced them to toil constantly. After years of harsh treatment from their cruel father and brothers, the hopeless sisters snapped and killed an abusive traveler during a chance encounter. They butchered the body and served the remains to their unwitting family. Thus began a cycle of murder and cannibalism that persisted for years.

The Mindefisk sisters' crimes were finally revealed when they all fell in love with a charming stranger. They squabbled, and unwilling to relent or share, they murdered the stranger in full view of their horrified family. With nothing left to lose, the sisters killed the rest of their family as the Mists rose around them.

The horror of the Mindefisk sisters only grew in the Domains of Dread. Finding themselves in Tepest, the sisters discovered their new nature as hags. Over generations, mortals and fey alike came to know them as fickle miracle workers. Despairing families came to them often, willing to trade much for hexblood children born from the hags' magic.

Eventually, Lorinda grew fascinated by others' pursuit of family. She entreated her sisters to help her create a child, but Laveeda and Leticia refused, loathing the idea of any one of them having greater happiness than the others.

Defying her sisters, Lorinda assembled a monstrosity of animal parts and foul magic in secret. With her new daughter's help, the hag trapped her sisters inside their magic cauldron and stole their powers. Yet Lorinda's joy with her creation was short—the monster's magic quickly waned, and it rotted away. Ever since, Lorinda has sought to create a family of her own, producing countless monstrosities in experiments and approaching the villagers of Viktal in her guise as Mother. Over generations, this has given rise to the cult of the Mother in Viktal, but it has brought Lorinda no closer to attaining the lasting family connection she covets.

Mother Lorinda's Domain

Tepest is altered by Lorinda's presence, creating the following effects:

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Mother Lorinda can close or open the borders to Tepest at will. While the borders are closed, a violent storm fills the Mists surrounding Tepest. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 2d8 Lightning damage and be pushed up to 30 feet straight toward Tepest. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Mother's Watchers. Creatures that have sacrificed an eye to Mother can take a Magic action and pray to her. When they do so, Lorinda can perceive through the creature's senses as well as her own until the end of the creature's next turn. When perceiving through a creature's senses, Lorinda benefits from any special senses it has.

Sun and Storms. While in Tepest, Lorinda can cast Control Weather, requiring no Material components and using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting. When casting the spell this way, Lorinda can control the weather within 5 miles of herself, regardless of whether she is inside or outside.

If Lorinda dies, these effects end immediately.

Mother Lorinda's Lair

Ranging across the domain is Mother Lorinda's home, the Gurgyl. This towerlike structure of thorns, wicker, and giants' bones walks on three skeletal dragon legs.

The Gurgyl

The villagers of Viktal know the Gurgyl serves their god in some way, but sighting it portends bad luck. The site has the following features:

Kitchen-Laboratory. The Darklord concocts foul creation magic in this central chamber.

Nursery-Oubliette. This room is home to whichever monster Lorinda calls her daughter, Laoirse.

Old Cauldron. Lorinda's hag sisters languish in this plugged, oversize pot.

Adventures in Tepest

Adventures set in Tepest feature rural cults, deceptive fey, and dread of nature's mysteries. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Celebrants parade from Viktal to Mother's Sight to honor their god on the day of the Tithe

Sylvain Sarrailh

Horror in Tepest

Adventures in Tepest often include the following elements.

Strangeness in Viktal

The locals seem welcoming and vigorous in their worship of the nature deity, Mother. The village leader, Wyan, guides them in their faith, assisted by elders called Mother's Minders—all of whom are missing their left eye.

Residents invite visitors to stay at the village's only inn, the Fisher's Rest, free of charge for as long as they please. They encourage new arrivals to linger and participate in their upcoming festival, called the Tithe (detailed later in this section).

Mother's Children

Multiple times a year, Lorinda goes through a cycle of trying to magically create a new child. She calls this monstrous being Laoirse and dotes on it for a time. She believes that sacrifices to Laoirse during the Tithe can extend her child's life, but inevitably, the monster's magic fades, and it becomes mud and bones once more. For weeks afterward, Lorinda remains inconsolable, and violent storms and strange disasters plague Tepest.

Lorinda's children take varied forms. To create such a monster, choose a stat block appropriate to challenge your characters, then consider how that creature might appear if it were made from different parts. For example, a Minotaur of Baphomet or Werewolf might be a bipedal mixture of ram, stag, and wolf parts, while a Shambling Mound might be a person made of wicker. These descriptions should seem outlandish but reflective of the creature's traits and actions. And no matter how bizarre her children are, Lorinda loves them all the same.

Tepest Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Tepest often involve Viktal's cult and the dangerous spirits of the wilds. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–2. Characters find themselves welcomed in Viktal and encouraged to take part in the Tithe (see the adventure below). At the rite's conclusion, the villagers try to sacrifice one or more characters to one of Mother's children. The characters defeat the monster, earning the enmity of both the villagers and Mother Lorinda.

Level 3–5. Fey creatures or druids who have been victims of Lorinda aid the characters; they reveal that she is no god, but a powerful hag who wanders the land in a walking tower called the Gurgyl. They send the group on a quest to learn from a mystical site or elder forest spirit how to infiltrate the hag's lair.

Levels 6–8. After learning how to infiltrate the Gurgyl, the characters locate and break into Lorinda's lair, finding some of the hag's bizarre creations and her diminished, imprisoned sisters. When they emerge from the mobile fortress, they find themselves near Viktal, where Lorinda confronts them, backed by her fanatical followers.

Levels 9+. If the group defeats Lorinda, the land spirals into chaos as fey from Mount Arak run wild. The characters might become involved in a power struggle between the good and evil fey of Arak. Lorinda's return might drive the fey back—but the Darklord will help only if someone becomes her new child.

The Tithe

Adventure for Level 2 Characters

Situation. The characters participate in a religious celebration, at the end of which they are poised to become sacrifices.

Hook. The human leader of Viktal, Wyan (Medium, Neutral Evil Priest) invites the characters to participate in the Tithe, a rite honoring their god, Mother.

Map 2.33: Viktal

Francesca Baerald

Player Version

Francesca Baerald

Map 2.33: Mother's Sight

Francesca Baerald

Player Version

Francesca Baerald

Encounters

This adventure begins the day of the Tithe, after Friendly villagers from Viktal (Commoners) lead the characters to Mother's Sight. It uses map 2.33 and consists of these encounters.

Tithe Competitions. Wyan directs the assemblage in a prayer to Mother, and the day of games begins. Characters each can play three games, participating in each selected game once. During each game, a character makes the ability check listed on the table below three times. Those who succeed on the check two or more times win the game; if they fail, a villager wins.

Tithe Game	Check
Crooked Joust. Participants use stilts strapped to their arms and legs to topple one another.	Strength (Athletics)
Powrie Chase. Pursuers play tag in while wearing tattered red cloaks.	Dexterity (Stealth)
Lost Siblings. Blindfolded participants identify other players by touching their hair.	Intelligence (Investigation)
Gossamer Glutton. Whoever eats the most live moths wins.	Constitution
Never Naughty. Participants flatter elderly villagers, who decide who wins and who gets paddled.	Charisma (Persuasion)

Characters who don't play a game might socialize and see some benign oddity extrapolated from the details presented earlier in this section.

Competition Winners. The day's games draw to a close at dusk. Wyan names a character who won two or more games as Mother's Favorite and crowns them with a garland of white camellias. If no character won this many games, a human villager named Lorelei (Medium Commoner) wins the crown and invites them to sit with her at the head table during the feast.

Feast. Wyan begins the feast with another prayer as the Mother's Minders light a grand bonfire within a tall scaffold. During the feast, villagers encourage the characters eat and drink to excess. A character who does so must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain the Poisoned condition for the next 6 hours.

The Sacrifice. At midnight, standing before the scaffold (see map 2.33), Wyan announces, "Now we prove our undying love for Mother and beg her for another season of bounty. Bring forth our sacrifice!" Mother's Favorite receives a bowl of food and tiny crafts and is instructed to take it to the bonfire.

If Lorelei is Mother's Favorite, she obeys and approaches the bonfire. If a character is Mother's Favorite, they choose whether to approach. Regardless, 2 rounds later, a biped with wolflike features and stag's horns (use the Minotaur of Baphomet stat block) emerges from the field nearest Mother's Favorite. This is one of Lorinda's monstrous children. It fights Mother's Favorite (and anyone else who damages it) to the death. During combat, the villagers raise their voices in a hymn but stay out of the conflict. Lorelei smiles and doesn't defend herself if attacked.

Conclusion. If the monster dies, Wyan and the villagers are horrified that the Tithe went wrong. They turn Hostile, blaming the characters and demanding they leave. Mother Lorinda learns of this and seeks revenge.

If the monster wasn't killed, the villagers remain Friendly, but their true nature becomes clear. Mother Lorinda also takes an interest in the characters, potentially seeking to adopt them as her new children.

Regardless of how the Tithe concludes, the characters gain 200 XP.

Valachan

Domain of the Hunter

Darklord: Chakuna

Genres: Gothic horror and slasher horror

Hallmarks: Deadly predators, death traps, hostile wilderness, survival games

Mist Talismans: Displacer beast skin, poisonous flower blossom, rusty foot trap

Aligned Tarokka Card: Shepherd

Opposed Tarokka Card: Darklord

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

In the wild domain of Valachan, only the deadliest predators survive. Bestial hunters, carnivorous plants, and ravenous monsters stalk the dense rainforests, but the land's greatest threat is its Darklord: the devious, undying hunter Chakuna.

Chakuna stalks the jungle, testing herself against the domain's deadliest beasts. Yet little delights her more than discovering strangers to her realm—visitors who soon realize they've become the Darklord's newest quarry. Chakuna forces her victims to participate in the Trial of Hearts, a race through the wilderness to remote sanctuaries. Participants face deadly traps and all the dangers of the wilds, including Chakuna herself. Those who reach the goal at the end of the trial are permitted to leave Valachan. Those who don't reach it die, either due to the deadly wilderness or at the hands of Chakuna herself.

Domain Features

Valachan is known for the following features:

Displacer Beast Packs. Packs of Displacer Beasts roam the jungle, led by Yana, a preternaturally large and cunning displacer beast that serves Chakuna.

Natural Hunters. Wild plants and creatures in Valachan usually seem hostile toward strangers. Most creatures here are carnivorous even if elsewhere they aren't.

Trial of Hearts. The deadly Trial of Hearts is a battle royale that starts on the night of the full moon. Chakuna chooses participants.

Wilderness Domain. Valachan is covered by a fantastically dangerous rainforest. Visitors face constant perils, but the domain's residents flourish.

Locations in Valachan

Valachan is lush and wild. Rare creatures and plants reign here, as do villages of people who understand and thrive in the rainforest. No roads pass through the land, but ships from other domains sometimes wreck on these shores. The settlement of Oselo and the Pantara Lodge are described below, and other notable locations are summarized on the Valachan Locations table.

Oselo

The former home of Darklord Chakuna, Oselo is a prosperous village that welcomes visitors. When night falls, the residents change, shifting from people into panthers, ocelots, tigers, and other hunting cats. These shape-shifters hunt animals for food and do battle with other peoples only to defend their home. Most fear Chakuna and want no involvement with the Trial of Hearts, fearing the Darklord's wrath. However, in rare instances, Oselo's shape-shifters might be convinced to guide, hide, or otherwise aid participants in the Trial. This displeases Chakuna, but she respects the decisions of her people's elders. The villagers might adopt strangers deemed worthy, but outsiders first must prove themselves in an initiation ceremony focused on surviving unarmed in the forest for a week.

Pantara Lodge

The Pantara Lodge is a series of thatched structures strung together high in the forest canopy, suspended above the overgrown ruins of a burned castle. This is Chakuna's home. Its interconnected treehouses include a great hall, the Darklord's personal quarters, an armory, an infirmary, and several guest lodges. The Darklord's Displacer Beast and Panther allies prowl the trees amid the lodge's structures and can enter them freely.

Map 2.34: Valachan

Jared Blando

Player Version

Jared Blando

Valachan Locations

Location	Description
Council of the Whip Spider	Within this cavern, a sapient Giant Spider presides over representatives of countless insect species. Those seeking insect allies might entreat these councilors for aid.
Forest of Fossils	Dinosaurs and megafauna seem common in the Forest of Fossils. The region's most notorious predator is Mother Heartless, a heavily scarred Tyrannosaurus Rex.
Gasping Way	The steep walls of the forested ravine called the Gasping Way keep the forest below in near-constant shadow. Quicksand, common along this route, acts with deadly swiftness.
Poison's Taste	People say the lake called Poison's Taste is filled with the venom of a giant, sleeping snake. Most who drink from the lake die—but those who survive become immune to nearly all poisons.
Sangui Cove	Sharks, Plesiosaurs, giant aquatic snakes, and other waterborne menaces battle each other constantly in Sangui Cove. Deep below lie the wrecks of ships, some laden with fantastic wealth.
Shuaran	The human warriors of the village of Shuaran value honor above all. They avoid Chakuna and might help her foes or those who offer aid against the deadly howling Apes that dwell nearby.
Sleepless Forest	Noisy animals and pests are common in the Sleepless Forest. Anything that dies here reanimates as a Zombie the following night, shambles away, and collapses in a quieter resting place.

Location	Description
Starving Water	Skeleton-covered ruins jut from the center of the Starving Water. The deadly waters frequently release gases in limnic eruptions capable of suffocating nearby creatures.
Throne of Eels	An Aboleth named Apez-Zos lurks within bizarre ruins beneath the lake called the Throne of Eels. It has enthralled nearby lizardfolk communities into serving it and seeks to supplant Chakuna.
Weeping Rainforest	The predators in the Weeping Rainforest have a sadistic streak, grievously wounding their prey, then leaving it to struggle in high trees. The cries of the wounded ring through the canopy.
Yaguara's Heart	Within the canyon of Yaguara's Heart lies a temple, beneath which sprawl blood-painted caverns. Hidden inside is Chakuna's beating heart, which binds her to the land.

Chakuna

Darklord Who Hunts to Survive

Karina Refrynn (WeirdUndead)

"*You seem capable, but do you have the heart of a hunter?*"

— Chakuna

Chakuna is Valachan's deadliest hunter, a youthful werepanther with the intensity and calm of a veteran executioner. Few can elude her cold cunning, deadly traps, and packs of feline allies.

Chakuna is no mere murderer. She hunts because she must to protect the people of Oselo from a more terrible fate. To that end, she prefers to target strangers in her land, forcing them to participate in the Trial of Hearts. She relishes the chance to hunt the proud and disrespectful, as well as the skilled and unpredictable. Chakuna knows no mercy, though, and even those she comes to respect eventually face her blade. She spares

the people of Oselo alone, even as her peoples' fear of her grows.

Chakuna

RHW p174

Medium Monstrosity (Lycanthrope), Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+12 (22)	210 (28d8 + 84)	30 ft., 50 ft. (panther form only), Climb 40 ft. (panther form only)	11 (XP 7,200, or 8,400 in lair; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	17	+3	+3	**Dex**	18	+4	+4	**Con**	16	+3	+7
Int	10	+0	+0	**Wis**	15	+2	+6	**Cha**	11	+0	+0

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +12

Senses Darkvision 150 ft., Passive Perception 20

Languages Common (can't speak in panther form)

Traits

Darklord Restoration. If Chakuna dies and her heart remains intact, she revives with all her Hit Points in 1d10 weeks somewhere in Valachan. Chakuna's heart is a Tiny object that has AC 17, HP 10, and Immunity to all damage except Fire.

Experienced Hunter. Difficult Terrain composed of undergrowth doesn't cost Chakuna extra movement.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Domain). If Chakuna fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Chakuna makes three attacks, using Scratch or Barbed Spear in any combination. She can replace one attack with a Bite attack.

Bite (Panther or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) Piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15. *Failure:* The target is cursed. If the cursed target drops to 0 Hit Points, it instead becomes a werepanther under the DM's control and has 10 Hit Points (use the Weretiger stat block). *Success:* The target is immune to Chakuna's curse for 24 hours.

Scratch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Slashing damage.

Barbed Spear (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Piercing damage and the target receives a dire wound if it doesn't have one. While the target is wounded, its speed is reduced by 10 feet, and it loses 5 (1d10) Hit Points at the start of each of its turns. The wound closes after 1 minute, after a spell restores Hit Points to the target, or after the target or a creature within 5 feet of it takes an action to staunch the wound, doing so by succeeding on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. *Hit or Miss:* The spear magically returns to Chakuna's hand immediately after a ranged attack.

Bonus Actions

Prowl (Panther or Hybrid Form Only). Chakuna moves up to her Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. At the end of this movement, she can take the Hide action.

Shape-Shift. Chakuna shape-shifts into a Large panther-humanoid hybrid or a Large panther, or she returns to her true humanoid form. Her game statistics, other than her size, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, Chakuna can expend a use to take one of the following actions. Chakuna regains all expended uses at the start of each of their turns.

Pounce. Chakuna moves up to half her Speed and makes one Scratch attack.

Strike from Shadows. Chakuna makes one Barbed Spear attack. If Chakuna has the Hide action's Invisible condition, this attack doesn't end that condition. Chakuna can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Sudden Bite. Chakuna uses Shape-Shift to turn into her hybrid form or panther form and then makes one Bite attack. Chakuna can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Regional Effects

Valachan is altered by Chakuna's presence, creating the following effects.

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Chakuna can close or open the borders to Valachan at will. While the borders are closed, shadowy beasts skulk or soar amid the Mists surrounding Valachan. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 1d10 Piercing damage.

Heightened Senses. Beasts and Monstrosities have Advantage on Wisdom checks.

Whispering Shadows. Humanoids subtract 1d8 from any ability checks they make when they take the Hide action.

If Chakuna dies, these effects end immediately.

Chakuna's Tale

For untold generations, Darklord Urik von Kharkov ruled Valachan from Castle Pantara and hunted the people of Valachan for sport. Yearly, the Darklord's hunts grew in carnage, with his favorite prey being the shape-shifters of Oselo. Von Kharkov viewed himself as the domain's greatest hunter, a title he confirmed every time he slaughtered one of Oselo's supernatural warriors.

Chakuna was a werepanther warrior of Oselo and, like most of her people, was a skillful hunter. Seeing that von Kharkov eventually would slay her entire village, she swore to save Oselo. Realizing it would take a monster to slay a monster, she left her people and sought the deepest secrets of her deadly homeland. When she returned, she volunteered to let von Kharkov hunt her. During the murderous game that followed, Chakuna burned Castle Pantara and took the former Darklord's head.

Valachan is no mundane land, though. A Domain of Dread demands a Darklord, and Valachan will be ruled only by its greatest hunter. Refusing to let von Kharkov return, Chakuna made a pact with the domain itself. Within the depths of the mazelike Yaguara Mountains, Chakuna ripped her own heart from her chest and consumed the heart of Urik von Kharkov. Doing so, she stole von Kharkov's powers. Yet to retain them, she must feed the land constantly with the blood of the hunted. If she doesn't, the plants and animals of Valachan grow murderous and howl for von Kharkov's return. So Chakuna continues a cycle of bloodshed, embracing the violence of her peoples' onetime oppressor to ensure her bitter domination of her vicious realm.

Chakuna's Domain

Valachan is altered by Chakuna's presence, creating the following effects.

Closing the Borders. While in her domain, Chakuna can close or open the borders to Valachan at will. While the borders are closed, shadowy beasts skulk or soar amid the Mists surrounding Valachan. A creature that enters the Mists for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 1d10 Piercing damage.

Heightened Senses. Beasts and Monstrosities have Advantage on Wisdom checks.

Whispering Shadows. Humanoids subtract 1d8 from any ability checks they make when they take the Hide action.

If Chakuna dies, these effects end immediately.

Chakuna's Lair

Built above the overgrown ruins of von Kharkov's Castle Pantara, the Pantara Lodge is a maze of rope bridges, mighty boughs, and structures built among the branches of gigantic trees. Chakuna leaves those who die in the Trial of Hearts without demonstrating skill or honor dangling from the branches of her home.

Pantara Lodge

The Pantara Lodge rises 80 feet above the rainforest floor. The site is depicted on map 2.35 and has the following features:

Chakuna's Chambers. In her quarters, Chakuna studies lore from other realms, fruitlessly seeking ways to placate her domain without further bloodshed. Secret doors hidden here lead to her meditation chamber and a room where the undying head of Urik von Kharkov spits curses and plots his return.

Great Hall and Banquet Room. Chakuna welcomes guests in the lodge's great hall. Prior to the Trial of Hearts every moon, she hosts a lavish meal for her prey.

Trophy Gallery. The trophy gallery holds the skulls of deadly beasts, the weapons of those who failed to murder Chakuna, and the stuffed corpses of the Darklord's rivals—animals and people alike.

Adventures in Valachan

Adventures set in Valachan involve merciless wilderness, predatory animals, and deadly hunts. Use this section to develop horror adventures in this domain.

Lethal traps and hidden snares threaten participants in the Trial of Hearts

Sylvain Sarrailh

Horror in Valachan

Adventures in Valachan often include the following elements.

Trial of Hearts Rules

Visitors to Valachan likely are forced to participate in the Trial of Hearts, a dangerous game where the domain's Darklord hunts them. On the night of the full moon, Chakuna selects those she considers worthy to participate. At the Pantara Lodge, she shows her guests every courtesy, provides them with a map of the domain, and sets out these rules for the trial:

- Participants can divide into small groups or go it alone.
- Once groups are established at the trial's start, alliances between contenders aren't permitted.
- Participants must reach one of two shrines: either on Kiru Island or between the lakes called the Scars atop Anquara Plateau.
- Participants can leave the Pantara Lodge at dawn. The following dusk, Chakuna pursues the contenders with hunting partners of her choice, attempting to slay any participants she encounters outside a shrine.
- Only one person or group can occupy a shrine.
- Participants can kill one another for any reason—particularly to take a shrine.
- The trial doesn't stop for any reason until Chakuna arrives at both shrines and acknowledges any winners there.
- The Darklord's servants escort winners to the village of Shuaran, and from there, out of Valachan.
- Losers rot where they fall.
- Rule breakers are killed.

Chakuna wants the trial to be challenging. If she catches a competitor too soon, she might release them if they sacrifice an ally, a limb, or a valuable weapon. Anyone who dies in the trial feeds the domain's bloodlust—even those who fall to a threat other than the Darklord herself.

Valachan Exploration

Valachan is a dense and deadly wilderness. When creating adventures here, refer to chapter 2 of the Dungeon Master's Guide for details on travel and journeys with stages.

Characters use the rules in the "Travel Pace" section of the Player's Handbook. Valachan's forests prevent a party from traveling at faster than a Normal pace, and their density makes them Difficult Terrain, reducing travel pace by half. This means most characters can move through the domain at a Normal pace of 1½ miles per hour and 12 miles per day.

Flying. Difficult Terrain slows flying creatures in Valachan, due to the strong winds above the forest canopy. Flying creatures are also easy to spot, attracting the attention of Chimeras, Pteranodons, and condor-like Rocs. Chakuna might stipulate that flight is off-limits during the Trial of Hearts. If she does, the Mists aid in enforcing this rule.

Navigation. It's easy to get lost in Valachan's jungles. Unless they use gorges and waterways for guidance, characters must make DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks to avoid getting lost. Those who fail spend 1d4 hours wandering and risk encountering deadly creatures (see "Trial of Hearts" for suggestions). Characters should make this check once during each stage of a journey, or after dramatic or disorienting encounters.

Trial Route: Kiru Island. An approximately 20-mile route from the Pantara Lodge to Kiru Island runs along the gorge south of the lodge to the Eirubamba River, then along the coast to Kiru Island. At a Normal pace, this route takes a day and a half (13 hours) to complete. Roughly 10 miles of this route follows the river. Characters who use a raft can move at Fast pace along the river. Rapids make the river Difficult Terrain, but even so, moving at this pace reduces the journey to just over a day (11 hours).

Trial Route: The Scars. Participants in the Trial of Hearts who travel from the Pantara Lodge to the Scars on Anquara Plateau have a route of approximately 20 miles if they follow the Shadowtaker Lakes east to the river called Killer's Road, then ascend Anquara Plateau. Characters can follow most of this route at a Normal pace, but 2 miles involve climbing into the mountains—a Slow pace through Difficult Terrain, reducing movement to 1 mile per hour. This route takes over a day and a half (14 hours) to complete.

Displacer beasts and other deadly feline hunters stalk the bridges of the Pantara Lodge

Bastien Grivet

Valachan Campaign Arc

Campaigns set in Valachan often feature the Trial of Hearts and Chakuna's connection to her domain. A campaign here might follow this outline:

Levels 1–3. Consider starting this campaign in another domain or world. During their travels, the characters become shipwrecked.

Level 4–6. The characters wash up on the shores of Valachan. They must find ways to survive the rainforest and fend off a pack of Displacer Beasts that stalks them. They eventually find shelter in Oselo or Shuaran.

Levels 7–9. Having heard of their exploits, Chakuna invites the characters to the Pantara Lodge, offering to help them leave if they participate in the Trial of Hearts (see the adventure below). Before the trial ensues, the characters might learn secrets from the head of Urik von Kharkov.

Levels 10+. If the characters survive the trial, Chakuna helps them leave the domain. As they characters travel out of Valachan, locals from Shuaran or Oselo beg the characters to stay and slay Chakuna. Should the characters kill Chakuna, chaos erupts and Urik von Kharkov strives to retake power in Chakuna's absence.

Trial of Hearts

Adventure for Level 8 Characters

Situation. To escape Valachan, the characters must participate in the Trial of Hearts.

Hook. The hunter Chakuna (see earlier in this chapter) invites characters to Pantara Lodge to discuss helping them leave the domain.

Map 2.35: Pantara Lodge

Sean Macdonald

Player Version

Sean Macdonald

Encounters

The adventure uses map 2.35 and consists of these encounters.

Pantara Lodge. Chakuna seems welcoming and polite, inviting characters to relax before a feast where she'll explain how to leave Valachan. Note the Indifferent Displacer Beasts that prowl the lodge—Chakuna's guards and hunting companions. The characters receive a comfortable guest room where they can rest before dinner.

Chakuna's Guests. The characters aren't Chakuna's only guests. There are three other groups:

Lizardfolk. Tolocwa (Lizardfolk Sovereign) and three lizardfolk (Medium Warrior Veterans) are their tribe's best hunters.

Pirates. The human Rakengel (Medium Pirate Captain) and three Pirates from his crew were recently shipwrecked.

Thieves. Aian, Citana, and Lesar are Weretigers from Oselo who were caught stealing a rare herb.

Trial Rules. After Chakuna's guests have all gathered for a meal of vegetarian dishes and mineral water, Chakuna does the following:

- Explains the trial, outlining the rules from the "Trial of Hearts Rules" section.
- Insists this is the only way to leave Valachan.
- Notes that the group could attack her, but they would face her Displacer Beast allies. If they want to fight, they should wait for the trial.

The pirate group speaks up in protest, but growls from Chakuna's allies silence them. The Darklord answers questions, then encourages her guests to rest, as the trial starts at dawn. Those who leave before then violate the rules.

Cheating. Chakuna catches anyone who tries to leave the lodge early or otherwise cheat. She encourages them to obey the rules and calls on six Displacer Beasts to enforce them. She calls the monsters off before anyone dies.

Choosing a Route. Have the characters choose a shrine as their destination and determine their route (see "Valachan Exploration").

Trial Encounters. The trial is divided into three phases, including a night camping in the jungle. As you narrate the characters' journey through the wilderness, roll on the following table for an encounter that happens during each of the first two phases and another that occurs while camping.

Jungle Events

1d8	Characters Encounter...
1	An ambush by the thieves (see above).
2	Chakuna, who runs past covered in blood; then four Displacer Beasts attack.
3	Flooding or rock falls. A character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or 2 hours are added to the journey.
4	Four Swarms of Ravenous Insects.*
5	Three Zombie Plague Spreaders* or a Relentless Slasher* that survived a previous trial.
6	A Hydra or two Shambling Mounds.
7	A Tyrannosaurus Rex or two Giant Crocodiles.
8	A murdered member of another group. Roll a die; if you roll an even number, the corpse has a Potion of Healing.

*Detailed in chapter 5

Chakuna During the Trial. Chakuna might appear and menace characters, but don't track her travels or have her fight the characters directly.

Kiru Island Event. During the last phase of their journey, groups traveling to Kiru Island must find a way to cross Sangui Cove. While crossing, they are attacked by a Giant Shark and a Giant Crocodile.

Scars Event. During the last phase of their journey, groups traveling to the Scars must climb 120 feet up Anquara Plateau. While they do, a Giant Ape attacks them from above.

Trial Shrine. At both destinations, the trial shrine is a wooden platform bearing a statue of a panther. It hangs at the end of a 200-foot-long rope bridge suspended 60 feet over a spiked pit. Those who fall into the pit take 21 (6d6) Bludgeoning damage plus 36 (8d8) Piercing damage.

Rival. If the characters reached the shrine in less than 15 hours, they are the first ones there. After 2d4 hours, the pirate group arrives at the Kiru Island shrine, and the lizardfolk group arrives at the Scars shrine. Both groups are missing any members who died in previous encounters, but they're Hostile and fight the party. If the characters took longer than 15 hours, this rival group arrives first.

Conclusion. An hour after the group contends with its rivals, Chakuna arrives. If the characters followed the rules of the Trial of Hearts, she pronounces them victors and upholds her end of the bargain—helping them leave Valachan. If they broke the trial's rules in even the slightest way, Chakuna knows it and fights them. In either case, each character earns a bonus 2,100 XP.

Other Domains of Dread

None can say how many domains drift through the Mists. This section hints at the multitudes of additional Domains of Dread. Detail and explore them in your adventures, or use them as examples when creating your own domains using chapter 4.

The Agency

Darklord: Flimira Vhage

Hallmarks: Detective work, memory loss

Everything inside the office of the Agency is a monotone gray. Anyone who passes the frosted glass door into this single-room domain is expected by Flimira "Flintlock" Vhage, the detective agency's owner. From here, Flimira collects cryptic correspondence relating to mysteries across the Domains of Dread. She enlists agents to investigate these cases, then report back to her. However, she never reveals her own past as a detective-turned-criminal, her involvement in every case her agency investigates, or that the Agency exists within her mind.

Bluetspur

Darklord: The God-Brain

Hallmarks: Abductions, false memories, illithids

The entity that would become the God-Brain of Bluetspur was an illithid elder brain whose existence-violating experiments revealed a malignant truth of the multiverse. This secret manifested in the elder brain's mind as an alien disease. Terrified of learning this pernicious, devouring knowledge themselves, the other illithid elder brains banished their peer from existence. In actuality, the Dark Powers claimed the afflicted elder brain and granted it an alien domain. Now called the God-Brain by the mind flayers and stranger entities that serve it, this elder brain pursues radical methods of saving itself from the thoughts destroying it. Its servants claim trespassers and beings from other domains, violating their minds with their bizarre experiments.

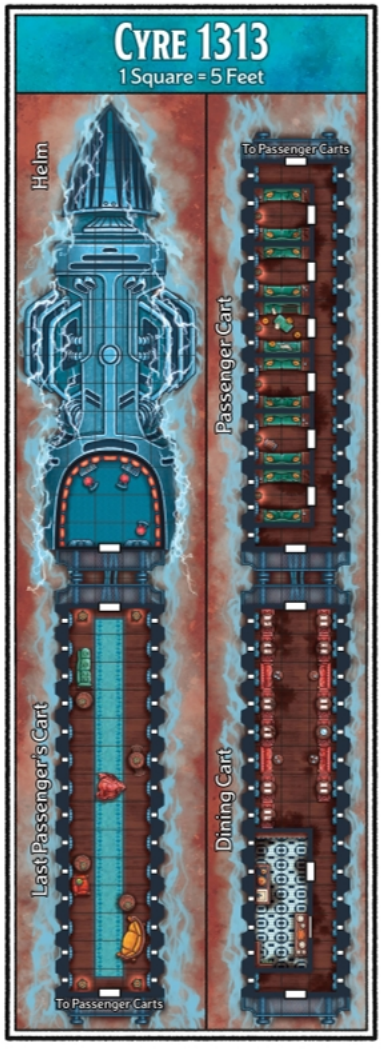
Carnival

Darklords: Isolde and Nepenthe

Hallmarks: Bargains, misfits, wandering exiles

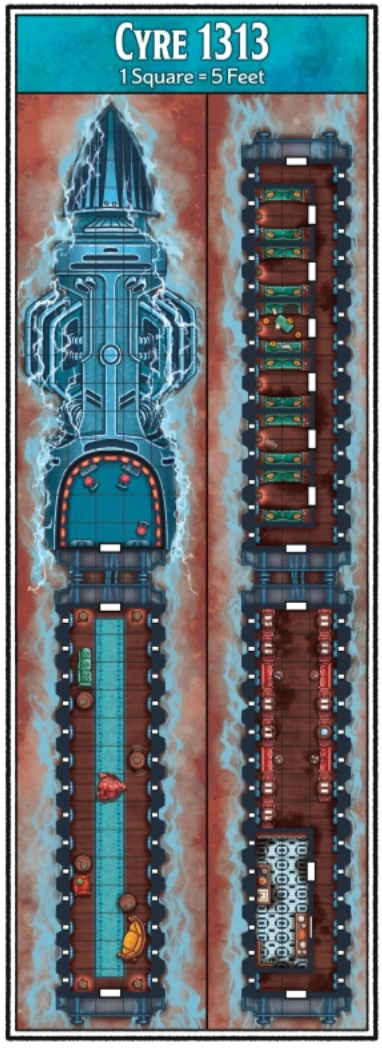
The Carnival is a wandering domain that appears within other Domains of Dread. Before the Carnival appears, mysterious fliers blow into communities near where it's about to arrive. When it arrives, the Carnival sets up a surreal wonderland of entertainment and oddities staffed by performers, outcasts, and cursed individuals from countless lands. Attractions include grand shows at the big top, sideshow performances, and the Hall of Horrors. The Carnival's mysterious leader is Isolde, a good but wrathful warrior of the Feywild who's cursed to lead the Carnival even as she hunts an elusive foe across the Domains of Dread. She carries the bladelike *Nepenthe*, a weapon that hungers for blood. Although driven by vengeance and painful memories, Isolde protects the Carnival at all costs.

Cyre 1313, the Mourning Rail



Map 2.36: Cyre 1313 Lightning Rail Carts

Stacey Allan & William Doyle



Player Version

Stacey Allan & William Doyle

Darklord: The Last Passenger

Hallmarks: Escape from disaster, lightning rail

The disaster known as the Mourning numbers among the greatest tragedies to befall the world of Eberron—a mysterious calamity that killed nearly everyone in the land of Cyre. In the nation's capital of Metrol, some citizens foresaw the coming devastation and sought to escape on lightning rails: elemental-powered engines capable of pulling trains of passenger carts. As scared innocents packed Metrol's last lightning rail, known as Cyre 1313, the evacuation was delayed at the demand of a late-arriving VIP. Hundreds were forced from passenger carts to admit and maintain the secrecy of this last passenger and their retinue. When the lightning rail finally departed, it was too late—the Mourning overtook the train and its escapees. But even as it did so, the Mists claimed Cyre 1313 and all aboard it. Now, the last lightning rail from Metrol hurtles through the Mists as a traveling domain.

Those on board fear the disaster pursuing them, the mysterious passenger seated in the train's foremost cart, and the necrotic energy now infusing the engine's elemental spirit. Yet none of the passengers realizes that their endless quest for escape is pointless, as Cyre 1313 carries only the dead.

Forlorn

Darklord: Tristen ApBlanc

Hallmarks: Life and death, strange invention

Tristen ApBlanc was born amid tragedy, the son of a vampire father and a human noble. Fearful villagers murdered his parents, leaving the boy to be adopted by druids. But during his teenage years, his dhampir nature revealed itself. When the druids discovered the youth's hunger for blood, they cast him out. Tristen grew enraged and slaughtered them, draining them all. The sacred waters of the druids' rituals had infused their blood, though, making it poison to the dhampir. Tristen died with his adopted family, but as the Mists closed in around their sacred stone circle, he rose as a ghost.

Unexpectedly, with the dawn, the Darklord's dhampir body was restored. Now, he lives by day, a perpetually young, charming, invention-obsessed dhampir dwelling in Castle Tristenoira, the smoking fortress his goblin servants built over the druid circle of his onetime family. At night, though, the dhampir dies a painful death, then rises in his spectral form to scour all that is green and vibrant from his land.

Ghastria

Darklord: Stezen d'Polarno

Hallmarks: Cursed art, dour population

A notorious hedonist, Marquis Stezen d'Polarno enjoyed popularity among his noble peers but craved immortality. A mysterious artist offered him eternity by painting Stezen's portrait on a magical canvas. But the artist didn't mention that the painting would strip Stezen of his love of life and natural charm. Despite his dulled existence, the marquis enjoys one reprieve: Once every season, when he shows his portrait to an audience, it consumes their souls and refreshes his thrill for life. Stezen's artistic predations captured the attention of the Dark Powers, which drew his lands into the Mists. Now, Ghastria is a fertile island that, like its lord, lacks an essential vim—except for once per season, when vigor fleetingly returns.

G'henna

Darklord: Yagno Petrovna

Hallmarks: Corrupt theocracy, false deity

Born of a Barovian family, Yagno Petrovna went missing on the slopes of Mount Ghakis as a youth. As a violent storm rose, he took shelter in a mysterious ruin and was found weeks later wandering the hills, babbling about an amber idol and the god he'd discovered: Zhakata the Provider and the Devourer. His family sought to help him, but when they learned Yagno had been secretly sacrificing people to his fictitious god, they chased him into the Mists. When he emerged, the domain of G'henna sprawled before him.

Life is hard in G'henna, a rocky land home to fierce, ravenous animals. The domain's starving people worship the bestial god Zhakata and regularly travel to the cathedral-city of Zhukar. There, they offer their crops in sacrifice and hear Zhakata's will through the revered prophet Yagno Petrovna.

I'Cath

Darklord: Tsien Chiang

Hallmarks: Labyrinth, inescapable dreamworld

In her youth, Tsien Chiang accidentally slew her gold dragon mentor to create a magic, wish-granting bell capable of driving invaders from her homeland. Her scheme worked, and the people made Chiang their queen. Over time, though, the people bristled under Chiang's rule and rose up in revolt. Slaughter and loss on both sides led Chiang to ring her magic bell again, but this time the bell cracked, and the Mists spilled forth. When they faded, Tsien Chiang was the ruler of I'Cath, a labyrinthine, nightmare city where the people sleep endlessly. In their dreams, they toil forever in a fantasy version of the city, working to maintain the perfectionism of their harsh queen.

Invidia

Darklord: Gabrielle Aderre

Hallmarks: Bad parents, possessed children

Gabrielle Aderre is convinced that her son, Malocchio, is destined for greatness. From her estate outside the village of Karina, she employs an endless string of servants to provide Malocchio with the best possible upbringing. Inevitably, though, every servant flees or vanishes, either as a result of Gabrielle's unreasonable expectations or the deadly tricks and accidents that frequently occur around the child. Gabrielle isn't content to leave her son's grand destiny to chance, though. Using her precious bone spirit board, she calls on supernatural forces to guide and protect her son. Spirits, angels, fiends, and worse answer her summons—but as long as they chart Malocchio's path to glory, the Darklord eagerly accepts their gifts.

Kalidnay

Darklord: Thakok-An

Hallmarks: Magical apocalypse, obsession

The city of Kalidnay was once the seat of power of Kalid-Ma, one of the monstrous sorcerer-kings of Athas. Thakok-An, the greatest of Kalid-Ma's enforcers, desired the sorcerer-king so greatly that when she learned of a plot against her master, she didn't reveal it. Instead, she performed a magical rite to grant Kalid-Ma even greater power, sacrificing her own family to do so. Her ritual went wrong, though, and life-draining magic washed over Kalidnay, destroying the city and draining life from nearly all its residents. Awaking amid the ruins, Thakok-An found Kalidnay surrounded by an endless sea of silt and mist. Worse, rather than being empowered, Kalid-Ma languished in a cursed torpor, the sorcerer-king's vast magic bleeding away.

Now Thakok-An obsesses over her sleeping king. From Kalidnay's survivors, she's created a new cult of servants. Following Thakok-An's wishes, these templars condemn trespassers in Kalidnay to ritual combat in the arena, where the lives of the slain sustain the secretly withering sorcerer-king.

Keening

Darklord: Tristessa

Hallmarks: Banshee, silent village

The forbidding land of Keening is dominated by Mount Lament, at whose base lies the village of Anwrtyn. The people of Anwrtyn deafen themselves so they won't hear the shrieking of the banshee Tristessa, a mournful spirit who roams Mount Lament and whose wail carries through the night. In life, Tristessa dwelled under Mount Arak in Tepest (detailed earlier in this book), but she was exiled for crimes against her people. In death, she endlessly seeks to reunite with the family slain by her misdeeds.

The deadly shrieks of the banshee Tristessa echo through the mountainous domain of Keening

David Astruga

Klorr

Darklord: Klorr

Hallmarks: Impending doom, surreal environment

Klorr is the end of worlds. Here, shattered islands drift through a misty netherworld, caught in a swirling, clockwork spiral that ends at the unignorable, burning eye called Klorr. Thirteen stars orbit this sunlike sphere, one winking out every hour. Each time one of the stars dies, one of the domain's ruined islands is drawn into Klorr and consumed by flames. Afterward, each other island wrenches ahead, then halts, one hour closer

to the same doom. When all thirteen stars have winked out, they return hourly to the sky.

Those who dwell on the crumbling islands trapped in the domain count the hours until their end. Few know how they came to Klorr or when new islands get added to the cycle, only that the Mists closed in and doomed them. Amid the realm's surreal skies float the ruins of lost domains—among them, a city of skulls, a realm overrun by dogs, and an array of bloody, iron arenas. Echoes of domains that exist elsewhere in the Domains of Dread also drift here, including at least one duplicate of Castle Ravenloft. Those cast away amid this orderly apocalypse grow ever more desperate to defy the doomsday clock and the will of a hidden Darklord, the obsessed clockmaker named Klorr.

Markovia

Darklord: Frantisek Markov

Hallmarks: Depraved science, sapient animals

Dr. Frantisek Markov is a genius—but less so than yesterday. His Markov Formula grants him unparalleled intellect, but it insidiously steals more than it gives, making him increasingly dull-witted and bestial in form. Despairing, the doctor fled to a tropical island he dubbed Markovia, where he tests new versions of his formula on the local fauna in hopes of recovering his waning genius. As a result of these tests, animals across Markovia now possess sapience and have been deluded into worshipping Markov as their god.

Nightmare Lands

Darklord: The Nightmare Court

Hallmarks: Nightmares, recurring dreams

Any who sleep might become forever trapped in the Nightmare Lands, a phantasmagoric realm whose features shift endlessly. Those who visit and escape speak of malicious wildernesses; the empty city called Nod; and uncountable drifting spheres, each containing a stranger's unending nightmare. Insidious entities called the Nightmare Court rule the domain. No one knows how many members make up the court, but they include the tragically graceful Ghost Dancer, the tomb-bound Hypnos, the witch Mullonga, the trickster Morpheus, and the embodiment of terror known as the Nightmare Man. These beings, artisans of nightmares, visit terrors on any whose sleeping minds brush against the domain.

The Nightmare Court's members share one commonality: All are the living nightmares of Caroline Dinwiddy, a potent psychic who has repressed memories of her own heartless deeds. These memories torment her sleeping mind, creating the Nightmare Court. Deep within the City of Nod, inside a warped reimagining of the clinic where she once worked, Caroline sleeps without waking, refusing to face the terrors her dreams unleash on innocents across the Domains of Dread and beyond.

Niranjan

Darklord: Sarthak

Hallmarks: Asceticism, brainwashing, shadows

The Ashram of Niranjan is a vibrant vihara, or monastery, on a misty chain of islands. Here the elderly scholar Niranjan leads ascetics in practicing Ramsana, a way of life prioritizing nonattachment to the material world. In truth, Niranjan is Sarthak, a wicked bronze dragon who sends agents into the Mists bearing his philosophical writings. These works promise escape and peace to any who adopt their teachings and search the Mists for their source. Those who come to the ashram must divest themselves of worldly goods, which become part of Sarthak's hidden hoard. Sarthak then helps his victims enter a trance that causes their souls to slip away from their bodies. Sarthak consumes these souls and replaces them with shadows, leaving the victims' bodies under his control.

Nova Vaasa

Darklord: Myar Hiregaard

Hallmarks: Nomadic riders, transformation

An unparalleled warrior, Myar Hiregaard united the nomadic tribes of the vast plains of Nova Vaasa. But, while respected as a soldier, Hiregaard made a poor peacetime leader. When brutal games could no longer keep her interest, she incited hostilities between two of her vassal tribes, then led her own forces to crush them. Subtly, she did this again and again.

After Hiregaard's greatest massacre, the Mists enfolded all of Nova Vaasa, splitting the Darklord's personality in two when they did. Now she rules her people with strict fairness—but when her bloodlust is piqued, she transforms into the raging knight called Malkan and sows discord across the plains.

Odaire

Darklord: Maligno

Hallmarks: Evil toys, village of children

The toymaker Giuseppe had his wish for a family granted when his creation, the marionette Figlio, came to life. A proud father, the toymaker presented his son to all the people of his village, Odaire. The local children loved Figlio, but their skeptical parents said the marionette was nothing but a toy. Over time, this doubt enraged Figlio, and the marionette convinced Giuseppe to craft siblings for him. Then, when the time was right, Giuseppe's creations did away with all the adults in Odaire.

Claimed by the Mists, Odaire is a village populated only by children and ruled by Figlio the Carrionette (see chapter 5), who now calls himself Maligno.

Map 2.37: Odaire Toy Shop

NerdyMaps

Player Version

NerdyMaps

Richemulot

Darklord: Jacqueline Renier

Hallmarks: Martial law, plague, wererats

The once-beautiful cities of Richemulot crumble as season after season of the Gnawing Plague afflicts the domain. Countless commoners and aristocrats have died, causing rule to settle with the vain noble Jacqueline Renier. Unbeknownst to the people, Jacqueline is a wererat whose servants create and spread the plague. She loathes what her domain has become but refuses to cede power back to the people by ending the ongoing disaster. Jacqueline's obedient state police, the Casques Silencieux, enforce martial law and quarantines across the domain.

Rider's Bridge

Darklord: The Headless Rider

Hallmarks: Haunted bridge, murderous legend

Nearly every domain knows some version of the apparition called the Headless Rider. It appears as a mercenary in dark armor in Mordent, a ghostly cataphract in Har'Akir, and a mutated centaur in Lamordia. But in each incarnation, certain details remain true: the rider lacks its head, it appears on a prominent bridge, and it decapitates victims as it endlessly searches for its own head. Anyone who escapes the Headless Rider might find a different domain on the opposite side of the spirit's bridge. (See "Dullahan" in chapter 5 for more details.)

Risibilos

Darklord: Doerdon

Hallmarks: Misdirection, ventriloquism

The Risibilos is a small music hall, similar to those found in any decent-sized city. Its lord, Doerdon, was once a king—one so thoroughly humorless that he forbade his subjects the privilege of laughter, on pain of death. He now finds himself cursed to entertain others—a task he is utterly unqualified for. Fortunately, the Mists delivered him a partner, a ventriloquist's dummy carved in the likeness of Strahd von Zarovich. The eerie dummy has a mind of its own, insisting it is the real Strahd and that the creature currently sitting on the throne of Castle Ravenloft is a mere impostor. It rages at the audience and makes audacious promises to any who will help it regain its station. Anyone with the slightest inkling of who Strahd is finds this hilarious. Their peals of laughter are agony to Doerdon's ears.

Scaena

Darklord: Lemont Sediam Juste

Hallmarks: Reality-manipulating theater

Lemont Sediam Juste fancied himself a serious playwright, and he achieved popular, if not critical, acclaim in Dementlieu for his works of grisly horror. But he craved respectability, and with his new play *Apparitions*, Lemont believed he would find it. The night of the premiere, when the audience signaled their boredom, the playwright was crestfallen. His supporters wanted blood, so he gave them what they craved.

By the play's end, Lemont had joined the drama and brutally murdered every member of the cast while the crowd roared their approval. As the show ended, the playhouse broke from Dementlieu, and Scaena was formed. Comprising a single playhouse, the domain can create any reality Lemont desires on its stage. The Darklord's immersive performances become somewhat predictable, though, as they always end in slaughter.

Sea of Sorrows

Darklord: Pietra van Riese

Hallmarks: Island domains, nautical horror

The murderous pirate Pietra van Riese, captain of the *Relentless*, had an unsavory reputation for attaching her captives to ropes and dragging them through the water until they drowned. She never removed the detritus of her victims, even though some returned to life as zombies. Rival captains ultimately sank the *Relentless*, but death couldn't keep Pietra. She awoke in the Sea of Sorrows, water in her lungs and sea creatures making their homes in her flesh. Her crew stirred with her, now fish-eaten corpses. When the captain sought to speak with them, her voice emerged from their mouths.

The *Relentless* sails a domain that can overlap any body of water in any other domain. Some domains border the Sea of Sorrows, while others call these mysterious waters by other names. Those who venture into the Mists by ship might enter the sea's endless debris-choked expanse of eerie beasts and shifting islands, including the following:

Blaustein. The island-fortress domain known as Blaustein once was ruled by the notorious Bluebeard, but his spectral wives overthrew him and now endlessly torment him.

Dominia. The asylum of the vampire Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth rises up from the stormy island of Dominia. The asylum's patients are all dramatically different versions of Heinfroth, inspired by who he was at various points during his lengthy life.

Isle of the Ravens. A storm of ravens surrounds this forested islet. Hidden amid the feathered gale, an impossibly tall tower reaches into the sky. The Isle of Ravens is home to the Lady of Ravens, and any who offend her join her ebon-winged flock.

The Lighthouse. Otherworldly light shines from the Lighthouse, a twisted spur of bizarre fossils. Anyone who enters finds that instead of broadcasting a warning across the sea, the light calls down to what lurks in the pit hidden beneath it.

Vigilant's Bluff. An undead paladin holds vigil atop Vigilant's Bluff. Weary travelers can find refuge here if they respect the paladin's faith. The bones of those who don't litter the surrounding coral.

Souragne

Darklord: Anton Misroi

Hallmarks: Imprisonment, swamp magic

In society, Anton Misroi presented himself as an upstanding gentleman who served as a prison warden. But within the walls of the prison, he became a sadist who believed righteousness was on his side. When his torturous punishments finally drove the inmates to rise up, the bloody riot that ensued drew the attentions of the Dark Powers. During the uprising, Anton drowned in the swamps surrounding the prison. But he rose again soon after, an undead warden in search of inmates.

Beyond Anton's prison, alligator-filled swamps cover the domain of Souragne right up to the sinking settlement of Port d'Elhour and Marais d'Tarascon, a village where above-ground crypts outnumber the residences of the living.

In Souragne, the walking dead rise to terrorize the village of Marais d'Tarascon

Luca Bancone

Staunton Bluffs

Darklord: Teresa Bleysmith

Hallmarks: Endless warfare, repeating history

Eerily faceless mercenary regiments sweep the countryside of Staunton Bluffs. Burning villages and killing helpless residents, they push ever eastward toward Castle Stonecrest, hereditary home of the Bleysmith family. Teresa Bleysmith, spurred by jealousy of her brother, Torrence, gave her family's foes the intelligence they needed to raid Staunton Bluffs. The attack was never supposed to go so far, but the duplicitous mercenaries stormed through the countryside to take Castle Stonecrest within a day. Teresa survived the attack—but when she surveyed the damage done and found her family dead by her own designs, she threw herself from the bluffs. Now she haunts her own domain, where she repeatedly relives the day of her betrayal.

Tovag

Darklord: Kas the Bloody Handed

Hallmarks: Undead military dictatorship

Notorious across the planes, the vampire Kas was once the champion of the lich Vecna. Wielding the mighty sword that bears his name, he betrayed his master, and the resulting battle supposedly destroyed them both. In truth, Vecna escaped and grew in power over ages and across worlds. Kas, though, was claimed by the Mists, and in his wasteland domain of Tovag, he believes his war with Vecna rages on. Patrols of prisoner-soldiers under undead commanders scour the land, dragooning strangers to serve in Kas's armies and to manufacture bizarre war machines. When Kas deems the time right, he sends his forces into the Mists, believing that Vecna's realm lies just beyond. Invariably, those troops never return, leaving the vampire to rage, rebuild his forces, and continue his search for the Sword of Kas (detailed in the Dungeon Master's Guide), which he considers his key to victory.

At least once, the Dark Powers have released Kas from his domain to torment their onetime prisoner Vecna. Inevitably, when Kas fails to defeat his ancient rival, the Mists return him to his domain to rage for another era.

Zherisia

Darklord: Sodo

Hallmarks: Serial murderers, urban decay

Each day, the city of Paridon in Zherisia erupts in riots over food scarcity, taxation, and the disappearance of dozens of citizens every night. At least one murderer stalks Paridon: the ancient doppelganger Sodo, which has impersonated so many people that it now finds it impossible to hold a form for more than a few days at a time. As Sodo's flesh runs like hot wax, it staves off dissolution by consuming the organs of humanoids. Paridon's streets serve as the Darklord's hunting ground, and those who enter the sewers risk attracting the notice of countless insectile horrors, including carrion stalkers (see chapter 5) and their monstrous Hive Queen.

Random Domains

Characters might find themselves in an unexpected domain when the Mists initially carry them to the Domains of Dread or if they aimlessly enter the Mists. When this occurs, roll on or choose a result from the Random Domains of Dread table to determine where the characters emerge. Domains marked with an asterisk (*) are featured domains detailed earlier in this book.

The Random Domains of Dread table also lists what tarokka cards are aligned with and opposed to each domain. Cards marked with a dagger (†) are also aligned with another Domain of Dread. Randomly determine which domain the Mists transport characters to when this card is drawn.

Random Domains of Dread

1d100	Domain	Aligned Tarokka	Opposed Tarokka
01-02	The Agency	Abjurer	Mists
03-05	Barovia*	Darklord	Mists
06-08	Bluetspur	Enchanter	Seer
09-10	Borca*	Beggar	Tempter
11-12	Carnival	Philanthropist	Broken One
13-15	Cyre 1313	Merchant	Executioner
16-18	Darkon*	Necromancer	Donjon
19-21	Dementlieu*	Charlatan†	Seer
22-23	Falkovnia*	Dictator	Executioner
24-25	Forlorn	Guildsman	Ghost
26-27	Ghastria	Trader	Artifact
28-30	G'henna	Missionary	Beast
31-33	Har'Akir*	Monk	Raven
34-35	Hazlan*	Diviner	Ghost
36-38	I'Cath	Tax Collector	Innocent
39-40	Innsmouth*	Bishop	Donjon
41-42	Invidia	Seer	Seer
43-45	Kalakeri*	Avenger	Artifact
46-47	Kalidnay	Conjurer	Executioner
48-49	Kartakass*	Swashbuckler	Beast
50-51	Keening	Invoker	Ghost
52-54	Klorr	Anarchist	Artifact
55-56	Lamordia*	Transmuter	Marionette
57-59	Markovia	Berserker	Broken One
60-61	Mordent*	Miser	Horseman
62-63	Nightmare Lands	Illusionist†	Mists
64-65	Niranjan	Healer	Marionette
66-67	Nova Vaasa	Myrmidon	Beast
68-69	Odaire	Traitor	Marionette
70-71	Richemulot	Thief†	Raven
72-73	Rider's Bridge	Soldier	Horseman
74-75	Risibilos	Charlatan†	Darklord
76-77	Scaena	Elementalist	Tempter
78-80	Sea of Sorrows	Thief†	Raven

1d100	Domain	Aligned Tarokka	Opposed Tarokka
81-83	Shadowlands*	Torturer	Broken One
84-85	Sithicus*	Paladin	Innocent
86-87	Souragne	Hooded Man†	Donjon
88-90	Staunton Bluffs	Mercenary	Mists
91-92	Tepest*	Druid	Executioner
93-95	Tovag	Hooded Man†	Darklord
96-97	Valachan*	Shepherd	Darklord
98-99	Zherisia	Illusionist†	Horseman
100	DM's design	—	—

Chapter 3: Ravenloft Adventures

Alanik Ray and Arthur Sedgwick investigate the occult art collection of the Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

Sean A. Murray

Drafting frightful encounters, adventures, and campaigns requires deliberate choices that cultivate an atmosphere of dread. This chapter explores how you, the DM, can use the Domains of Dread to create suspense during play and craft terrifying adventures.

Campaigns in the Mists

The surreal natures of the Domains of Dread, their Darklords, the Mists, and the Dark Powers serve as tools in your frightful adventures. None of them are too important to use, too mysterious to reveal, or too fragile to pit against characters. This section explores how to use the most infamous features of the Domains of Dread to create frightful campaigns.

Before preparing horror adventures, review the "Ensuring Fun for All" section of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Creating a Horror Campaign

When planning campaigns in Ravenloft, consider the guidance in chapter 5 of the Dungeon Master's Guide, along with the following topics. Record the answers to the questions in this section to inspire your campaign.

Campaign Characters

Characters exploring the Mists are the protagonists of horror stories. Chapter 1 provides advice for players creating such characters, but you should also consider the following questions:

Character Origins. Do the characters originate from the Domains of Dread, or were they abducted from somewhere else?

Context for Surreality. Do the characters realize something is strange about the Domains of Dread, or is the Land of the Mists all they've ever known?

Scale of Experience. Do the characters know about a single domain—perhaps one they all call home—or do they have firsthand experience with multiple domains or other settings?

Characters' Significance. Why are the characters special? Why did the Dark Powers, a Darklord, or something else take note of them?

Consistency of Experience. Do the answers to these questions apply to all of the characters?

Campaign Themes

Explore the types of horror adventures you're interested in by considering the following questions:

Horror Inspirations. What horror stories or media inspire your campaign?

Horror Icons. Is there a classic monster or villain that inspires the foes in your campaign?

Horror Genres. What genres of horror—detailed in chapter 4 or elsewhere—does your campaign focus on?

Domains of Dread. Which Domains of Dread or Darklords do you want to focus on? Or do you want to create a new Domain of Dread and Darklord following the methods in chapter 4?

Setting Mysteries

The Domains of Dread function in unique ways, but if and how that matters is up to you. "Ravenloft Setting Models" later in this chapter details ways to shape the setting to suit your adventures. Review that section and the following questions as you consider how the nature of the Domains of Dread might shape your adventures:

Escape. Do you want characters to pursue escape from the Domains of Dread? Do they want to leave even if a domain has been their home?

Islands or Regions. Does your campaign focus on a single domain, or are there multiple domains you want to explore?

Metaphysical Scale. Do you want your campaign to explore the unusual nature of the Domains of Dread, or is that nature broadly accepted reality?

Stories and Secrets. Are tales of other domains or settings treated as facts, lore known only to a few, legends, or nonsense? Is that true for all places beyond a domain's borders?

Traveling the Mists. Do people travel between domains? Is travel limited to wanderers such as Vistani, or are tools such as Mist talismans (see the introduction) common enough to allow for broader travel and trade?

Witnesses to the Surreal. How do domain residents react to supernatural events? Are they shocked, do they treat them as commonplace, or do they rationalize (or deny) abject horrors?

The answers to these questions are the ones that inspire you and your players.

Darklord Conflicts

Each Domain of Dread is a reflection of and a prison for a Darklord. The tales and torments of those Darklords are fundamental to adventures within their borders. Consider the following questions when developing your campaign:

Darklord Plots. Will your campaign involve the history, torment, and potential defeat of a Darklord? Or would you rather keep a Darklord in the background and focus on other stories?

Darklord Downfalls. Can a Darklord be defeated, or are they an enduring and recurring threat? What happens when a Darklord dies?

Darklord Defiance. What does it mean to best a Darklord? Does it mean slaying them, forcing them to open their domain's borders, undermining their plans, or something else?

Darklord Relationships. Does the Darklord want to destroy, conscript, or use the characters? Does the Darklord appear in person or communicate via proxies?

Darklord Rivalries. Does your campaign feature interaction between multiple Darklords? If so, how do they know about each other? What do they have to gain from their conflicts?

The "Using Darklords" section later in this chapter further explores ways to implement Darklords in your campaign.

Starting Your Campaign

Start your campaign in a way that establishes an ominous tone or highlights the nature of the Domains of Dread. Consider the following questions:

Collective Misfortune. Do the characters gather to mourn the death of a loved one? Does fate bring them together as the survivors of a disaster, such as a shipwreck or massacre?

Darklord's Summons. When a Darklord calls, the beckoned answer. Do the characters meet after being hired by a Darklord to perform some task or by attending a social event that turns ominous?

Present Terror. Do the characters meet amid terrifying circumstances, such as being prisoners or experiment subjects?

Shared Mystery. Do the characters gather due to a shared mystery? Are they led to the same place by an enigmatic message, or do they start cooperating as they flee being accused of murder?

Strangers in the Mists. Are the characters united by the Mists? Might they be traveling to other destinations when the Mists unite them?

During character creation, you can work with players to come up with reasons why the characters might be in a grim or unusual situation.

A horrific origin might also unite the party. Players might be interested in their characters sharing a species or a Dark Gift from chapter 1. A group composed entirely of Reborn or of characters who have the Aberrant Anatomy feat can provide ample inspiration for frightful adventures.

Campaign Considerations

Think about how you might reinforce a frightful mood over the course of your campaign. Consider the following questions about topics likely to occur during a series of adventures:

Allies and Sanctuaries. Is it ever appropriate to harm characters' allies or destroy places they consider safe? Is doing so worth making players feel like they've lost something they've invested in? See "Tragic Limits" in the Dungeon Master's Guide for advice on handling these topics.

Altered States. How might characters change during a campaign? Do you want to encourage players to develop character changes resulting from their experiences—such as scars, phobias, or Dark Gifts?

Character Secrets. What sorts of secrets might a character have, and are those boons to the game or potential disruptions? You can use the advice in the Dungeon Master's Guide on evil characters to incorporate characters with secrets into your game.

Death. What happens when a character dies? How might a character brought back from death be changed?

Fear. How do you expect characters to respond to frightful situations? Is fear reflected only by the Frightened condition, or would you like players to roleplay shock and revulsion?

Hope. How will you give characters hope and ensure they don't feel like the campaign is pointless? What rays of light perforate the darkness?

New Characters. If a character dies and isn't raised, how will you add a player's new character to the game? Do the Mists reveal a new hero, or might someone in a domain be inspired to act by another's sacrifice?

When thinking about the answers to these questions, avoid changing the rules of the game—these should remain the stable, agreed-on underpinnings of the game.

Ending Your Campaign

Horror stories often don't end well, but yours might be an exception. Have an idea of what makes a satisfying end for your horror campaign. Frame your thoughts on this by considering these questions:

Escape. Is the goal of your campaign for the characters to escape a domain or all of the Domains of Dread? Can they achieve this through the defeat of a Darklord, the will of the Dark Powers, or some other magical method?

Memorial. If a character dies, can they still contribute to a campaign's culmination? Can an accidental death become a meaningful sacrifice? Is there important work only a spirit can do?

Survival. Do you expect any or all of the characters to survive the campaign? Will the players be satisfied if their characters' stories end in defeat, transformation, or willing sacrifice?

Worthy Cause. What's the goal the characters might risk everything to achieve? Is this protecting a person or place, or is it keeping something out of a Darklord's hands? Is there a status quo that's vital to restore or a wrong that needs to be undone?

Ensure you and the players agree on what makes a fulfilling end to a campaign. Don't work toward a climax demanding a dramatic sacrifice that no one's interested in making.

Rowan Holloway

Further Development

Review your answers to the questions from this section to see what patterns emerge and what answers surprised or excited you. Let those answers develop into ideas for unique horror adventures and arcs for your own campaigns. Next, review the following sections in this chapter. These explore ways to employ elements of the Domains of Dread in your horror adventures and outline whole frightful campaign arcs.

Using Domains of Dread

Domains of Dread are backdrops to horror tales and the torments of their Darklord. These domains exist to confound and terrify those within. Everything in a Domain of Dread serves frightful ends, and if something seems like it doesn't, you just haven't revealed how yet. While creating horror adventures, consider the following facts about domains.

Ravenloft Setting Models

What domains compose the Ravenloft setting is up to you. The Domains of Dread have no definitive map or proscribed orientation for how they relate to one another. This allows you to shape the setting however best serves your adventures. Consider the following setting models for how you might use the Domains of Dread or use your favorite elements from multiple domains.

Haunted House Domain

In this model, a single domain functions like a haunted house. Characters enter, terrifying forces trap them, and the party struggles to escape. This model features in the adventures *I6: Ravenloft* (1983) and its descendant Curse of Strahd (2016). This setting model excels if you want to...

- Explore the tale of a single domain or Darklord.

- Highlight a narrow band of horror genres.
- Avoid interacting with multiple domains or traveling the Mists.
- Make a Darklord your adventures' focal villain.

Islands of Terror

In this model, the Domains of Dread are isolated realms that characters might reach by braving the Mists. Domains' inhabitants might be aware of each other, but travel is uncommon and dangerous. Characters might be inhabitants of a domain or wayward souls from other realms, and events might lead them through the Mists to other nightmarish lands. This model is broadly used in this book. This setting model excels if you want to...

- Highlight the mystery and surreal nature of the Domains of Dread.
- Feature tours of multiple domains while controlling where the Mists lead.
- Explore stories focused on the nature of the Mists and escaping the Domains of Dread.
- Make Darklords part of a cast of villains.

Clusters and Cores

In this model, the Domains of Dread are similar to countries on globe. The Mists mark the edges of the world, rise when Darklords close their domains' borders, and appear as they please, but otherwise domains are separated by geographical and political borders. Domain inhabitants know about one another, travel, and trade, while Darklords are powerful figures that might have political or warlike aspirations. Whether you create a cluster out of a small group of your favorite domains or meld many (or all) the domains into a continent-sized core is up to you. This is the model largely used in earlier explorations of the setting, including *Ravenloft: Realm of Terror* (1990) and *Domains of Dread* (1997). This setting model excels if you want to...

- Encourage characters to roam between domains.
- Highlight villains who are infamous in multiple domains or who must be pursued (or evaded).
- Explore large-scale plots, such as wars between or the destruction of the Domains of Dread.
- Obscure Darklords, making them figures that might not be widely known.

Gothic Earth

The similarities between Strahd von Zarovich and Dracula, between Viktra Mordenheim and Victor Frankenstein, and between other Ravenloft villains and icons of horror fiction and film are intentional. Because many of Ravenloft's villains and domains have real-world roots, elements from Ravenloft are readily portable into frightful adventures set on a version of Earth steeped in magic and gothic horror. While the details of such historic horror are beyond the scope of this book, consider using the tools herein to pit characters against menaces from your favorite horror tales. This model is explored in *Ravenloft: Masque of the Red Death and Other Tales* (1994).

Domain Details

To reinforce the types of horror your adventures explore and give domains their own malicious personalities, consider these setting elements.

Those who enter the Mists...

Sylvain Sarrailh

Darklord Reflections

Every domain can be viewed through the lens of its Darklord, with every part of the domain reflecting some facet of the Darklord's personality, ambition, or torment. You might think about adventures in a domain as explorations of a Darklord's identity.

For example, Barovia's gothic horror themes include deception, oppression, and predation, all of which are aspects of the domain's Darklord, Strahd von Zarovich. While the village of Vallaki leans toward themes of deception, the village of Barovia, in the shadow of Castle Ravenloft, is steeped in oppression. The domain's deadly wildernesses and beasts reinforce themes of predation. When a domain's terrifying forces reflect aspects of its Darklord, that villain becomes a terrifying culmination of the evil in the land and the personification of the domain's terrors.

Familiar Ground

Every Domain of Dread takes inspiration from stories within its related genres. Embrace this. Including tropes from your favorite horror stories reinforces expectations about the domain and provides a shorthand to help players understand a location. The Domains of Dread are intentionally filled with gothic castles, haunted manors, and beleaguered villages to hint at the types of characters and adventures you'll find within. Don't worry about recreating familiar stories, as the unpredictable actions of the players' characters will create a unique adventure.

Twisted Tropes. Wildly deviating from tropes can create unique locations, but doing so requires more explanation to help players understand the setting. Consider instead featuring familiar horror settings with a twist to make them more appropriate to D&D or to enhance their terror. For example, characters escaping an alien laboratory in Bluetspur might be stalked by an elusive displacer beast, or the ghosts haunting a house in Mordent might be desperately trying to keep something worse sealed in the basement. Minor twists help setting elements feel distinct and work better in your game.

Isolation

Isolation can take multiple forms in a domain.

Character Isolation. In the Domains of Dread, the characters are often the land's only opposition to a domain's evil and their own only hope for survival. While characters might find allies or sanctuaries in a domain, the characters must look to themselves for solutions. Escape is rarely an option.

Physical Isolation. Each domain is a complete setting that the Mists might isolate from all other lands. Locations within a domain are often isolated by dark, monster-haunted wildernesses. Even settlements and sanctuaries might have their own grim secrets.

... might discover nightmares worse than they escaped

Sylvain Sarrailh

The Locals

The inhabitants of domains endure or ignore the horrors around them. Whether these individuals are oppressed people or soulless pawns of the Dark Powers is up to you, but regardless, they don't effectively resist the horror within their homes. Characters should feel like they're among the only ones who recognize a domain's evil.

Incongruous Behavior. Consider treating a domain's inhabitants as part of the strangeness of the setting. Such NPCs might willfully ignore proof of the domain's horrors or passively behave in ways that reinforce a Darklord's will. In more surreal cases, NPCs might forget the characters or even reappear after dying.

Nightmare Nature

To any question regarding the natural world within a domain, the scariest answer is likely true. Use details of a domain to create a beat of small, unsettling moments to support the percussion of unignorable terrors in your adventures. If you highlight the strange nature of a domain often, the land feels surreal and haunted. If you do so more rarely, the domain feels more realistic. You might even change the pace of how often you

reinforce the strange nature of a domain, perhaps doing so more the farther characters are from civilization or safety.

For examples of frightful details you might highlight in a domain, roll on or choose a result from the Dread Details table.

Dread Details

1d8	In a Quiet Moment, a Character Witnesses...
1	Bestial eyes glaring from the shadows.
2	Clouds briefly take on frightful shapes.
3	A door unlatch and open on its own.
4	A farm animal or pet curse under its breath.
5	Flowers turn black, then wither.
6	A shadow or reflection move on its own.
7	A spectral orb drift through a wall or door.
8	A tree branch move like a grasping claw.

You can customize these suggestions to reinforce the themes of a domain or its Darklord. For example, in Falkovnia, a statue might momentarily resemble a rotting zombie, while in Har'Akir, Darklord Ankhtepot's visage might appear in a sandstorm. Strive to make such elements feel like moments of strangeness—harmless oddities that a character can dismiss as their eyes deceiving them, rather than suggestions of an immediate threat.

Using Darklords

Second only to the characters, Darklords are the most important inhabitants of the Domains of Dread. This section provides details and options for using Darklords in horror campaigns.

Darklords in Your Adventures

Most Darklords are important, recurring villains. Take time to understand these characters' origins and develop details that you can consistently express as characters repeatedly encounter them, their agents, and evidence of their deeds. The Dungeon Master's Guide provides details on developing villains as well as an NPC Tracker sheet. Use the guidance there and in the following sections to develop Darklords into infamous villains your players will be excited to learn about and oppose.

Roleplaying a Darklord

Most Darklords are irredeemably evil villains, obsessed with their own drives and desires. Many delude themselves into believing they're heroes or beings beyond morality. When preparing to roleplay a Darklord, review the Darklord's origin story and consider what traits are core to the Darklord. Aim to roleplay the Darklord in a way that makes sense with the villain's origins and that makes you excited to play them as a recurring character.

Then consider the following questions:

- What do you like most about the Darklord and want to highlight?
- What are the Darklord's three most positive traits?
- What are the Darklord's three most negative traits?
- Why do others fear the Darklord?
- What makes the Darklord effective in their role?
- Does the Darklord think they're a hero or better than others? Why?
- Does the Darklord always lie or never lie?
- How is the Darklord a reflection of one or more of the adventurers?
- What does the Darklord want more than anything?
- When would the Darklord be gracious or heroic?

Record your answers to these questions, then create a short list of characteristics you want to convey to the players over encounters with the Darklord.

Darklord Goals

In the adventure Curse of Strahd, the Darklord's goals are stated as follows:

- Transform and possess a victim
- Torment and slay a rival
- Test or toy with the characters

These goals guide Strahd's interactions with the characters through an entire campaign, allowing for the villain's consistent representation.

Recurring Darklords (or other prominent villains) should have similar, simple-to-understand goals. While you might know the finer details of a Darklord's motivations, players engage with villains only a limited number of times—likely with significant amounts of time between interactions. Choose one to three objectives for a Darklord that you can reinforce during character interactions or that you can hint at with other evidence. This helps the players understand what the Darklord wants and how to act against them.

Use the goals presented above and on the list below to inspire your Darklord's objectives:

Change society	Enforce order	Recover a lost treasure
Claim a new role	Escape their prison	Relieve their boredom
Continue a tradition	Find a missing person	Seek a revelation
Correct a tragic event	Maintain a lie	Suppress a secret
Defend the status quo	Prevent the inevitable	

Darklord's Tale

A Darklord's villainy informs their goals and the torments they suffer. As characters adventure in a Darklord's domain, they learn about the Darklord, hear reports of the Darklord's infamy, and eventually discover secrets to frustrate or undermine the villain. Consider these ways of revealing details about a Darklord:

Rumors and Legends. Domain inhabitants typically know of a Darklord or the results of the villain's evil. They can provide consistent reports of the Darklord's depredations, what little they know of the villain's origins, and examples of how their lives are affected by the Darklord's evil.

Evidence. Show the characters examples of the Darklord's evil, the suffering of the villain's victims, the crimes of the Darklord's servants, and how the domain is scarred by the Darklord's wickedness.

Lies. The Darklord or their servants provide flattering but false details of the villain's origins, personality, or objectives. Within such lies are truths commoners don't know.

Primary Sources. The truth of a Darklord's past might come from the villain's family, longtime servants or rivals, or historic records—such as journals, correspondence, or neglected artwork. Magical sources, such as mirrors that reflect the past or methods to enter the Darklord's memories, might also reveal secrets. Such truths might be hidden, but the Dark Powers ensure they survive to torment the Darklord.

The Tome of Strahd recounts the tale of Strahd von Zarovich. Other Darklords might keep similar records

Jane Katsubo

Darklord's Menace

Not every Darklord is a threat in combat to every party, but a Darklord's menace isn't rooted in their stat block. Rather, it's built over adventures where evidence of the Darklord's wickedness is established and reinforced. Consider the following questions to develop a Darklord's reputation, adding them as features of adventures:

Demonstrations. When the characters offend the Darklord, how does the villain express displeasure? Do they take it out on the domain's inhabitants? Do they dub the characters criminals or heretics and execute innocent people who helped the characters?

Law and Superstition. What do the domain's inhabitants do or refuse to do out of fear of the Darklord or the situation the Darklord has created? Have these habits become local traditions?

Servants. What serves the Darklord? Are they soldiers and servants? Are they monsters or strangely behaving animals? Is it the weather or environment itself? How do such servants make it clear they're extensions of the Darklord's will?

Signature Evidence. How does the Darklord prey or experiment on the domain's inhabitants and what evidence does that leave? If the Darklord executes or sacrifices foes, what is their signature form of slaughter?

Strangers. Do domain inhabitants believe strangers are agents of the Darklord or likely to attract the Darklord's attention? Do they avoid strangers or spy on them for the Darklord?

Titles. What is the Darklord's title? Is it a royal or religious title, or is it an epithet the domain's inhabitants call them?

Meeting a Darklord

Your players' first encounter with a Darklord should be memorable. Prior to this encounter, the characters might have heard rumors of the Darklord and witnessed their depravity. Reinforce this by planning how the characters will meet the Darklord and what the villain will be doing. Consider whether the Darklord is...

- Attempting to hire the characters.
- Commanding the Darklord's servants.
- Committing a signature crime.
- Engaged in an experiment.
- Having a decadent or horrible meal.
- Impatient with the characters' interruption.
- Pretending to be heroic.
- Trying to lure a victim.

Pay attention to the Darklord's first words to the characters. Chapter 2 presents greetings along with many Darklords' portraits. Take inspiration from these greetings, and have the Darklord's first words reflect their self-obsessed personalities and how they perceive strangers.

In future meetings, the Darklord should behave consistently. You might develop a signature way of speaking, turns of phrase, or an in-character voice for a Darklord, but keep these simple so the villain doesn't feel like a caricature or comedic figure.

Darklord Allies

Determine who serves the Darklord. A Darklord's servants should feel like facets of the Darklord's nature or goals. Characters should overcome these foes during adventures wherein they learn more about the Darklord. Defeating lesser villains gives characters a sense of progress while maintaining a Darklord's menace. Make a Darklord's allies exciting, but don't lose sight of the Darklord as the most important villain.

When developing allies for a Darklord, consider the following types of allies:

Advisers. Advisers grant the villain insights or control they wouldn't otherwise possess.

Copies. Some servants are lesser versions of the Darklord. They do the same things as the Darklord to a lesser extent, or they're a weaker version of the same creature as the Darklord.

Creations. A Darklord might be served by their creations, such as Construct or Undead servants. A relic or ritual might maintain the Darklord's control of such creatures.

Devotees. Devotees of a Darklord follow them without question. They might be whole organizations of soldiers or worshippers.

Grudging Allies. Some servants obey because they must. They might serve the Darklord to keep loved ones safe or out of a sense of duty.

Incidental Allies. Some allies don't directly serve the Darklord, but they and the Darklord both gain benefits from their partnership. A monster the Darklord keeps fed with sacrifices would be such an ally.

Majordomo. A majordomo is likely the Darklord's most powerful servant—the one who knows the most about them and, potentially, the one most likely to betray the Darklord.

Mini Darklords. Some servants control their own portions of a domain and embody the Darklord's will in that region.

Individual allies can occupy multiple roles.

The Holy Symbol of Ravenkind is one example of a relic used to defeat a Darklord

Jane Katsubo

Defeating a Darklord

Slaying a villain isn't in itself a heroic goal, but the death of a villain generally means an end to its evil and its ability to affect others. Such isn't true of Darklords.

Typically, when a Darklord is defeated in combat, their domain doesn't change, and fear of the Darklord doesn't fade. Moreover, the Darklord returns after a short time. While a Darklord is sidelined, their domain-affecting powers end, their servants go without orders, and the domains' borders open. Characters might enter the Mists and find their threats reduced, but this doesn't mean the Mists allow travel to other lands.

Thwarting a Darklord and escaping their clutches ultimately means delivering the villain a dramatic defeat—one that sends them into such a state of rage, desolation, or uncertainty that their grip on their domain is undermined. Such a defeat might involve a climactic battle following a series of heroic accomplishments. If you plan a climactic confrontation with a Darklord—after which the characters escape the Darklord's domain—determine how the characters must subvert the villain. These requirements should develop from the Darklord's origins and as counters to the goals you've developed for the villain (see "Darklord Goals" earlier in this chapter). Take inspiration for additional goals for the characters from the suggestions here:

Destruction. Destroy what the Darklord draws their power from, what they've been working to create, or their sanctuary.

Escape. Help a victim or captive of the Darklord escape the domain, or ensure they can't be part of the Darklord's plans.

Isolation. Disrupt those who empower the Darklord—like their soldiers, cultists, creations, or other allies—forcing the Darklord to spend years to make more.

Relic. Recover a symbol, icon, or weapon that is anathema to the Darklord.

Rivals. Empower foes of the Darklord, resurrect storied heroes, restore bastions of opposition, or reawaken sites of good magic within the domain.

Truth. Reveal the Darklord as a fraud or pretender to their position.

Characters should achieve these goals over the course of multiple adventures, culminating in a climactic encounter where the Darklord discovers the full extent of the characters' successes.

Unexpected Ends

It's fine if characters defeat a Darklord in combat before you intend. A Darklord loses control only after extraordinary events during an adventure's climax. Until then, any defeat is an inconvenience or was part of a Darklord's plans—in any case, it's an opportunity for adventures. Don't rob characters of the accomplishment of a victory, but don't let them think they've won for long. Use the suggestions below to reinforce a Darklord's threat even after an unexpected defeat.

Familiar Death. This isn't Darklord's first death. As they die, a Darklord might be amused, blasé, cocky, or fascinated, but not angry or fearful. As it departs, a Darklord might congratulate the characters or narrate their own end. Before dying, the Darklord should make it clear that the characters now have the Darklord's full attention.

No Remains. Darklords don't usually leave corpses. When a Darklord is defeated, the Mists claim their body, or the corpse dissolves in an unsettling or thematically appropriate effect.

Deadly in Defeat. With the Darklord's defeat, what contingencies take effect? Perhaps the Darklord left a letter or a gift to be delivered on the event of their death. Maybe their servants have orders about what to do on the event of the Darklord's disappearance—like commencing an attack or making a sacrifice. Perhaps threats the Darklord was restraining—such as hidden monsters or volatile servants—run wild, making the domain's inhabitants desire the Darklord's return. In any case, use a Darklord's defeat to demonstrate that the villain is just the face of a much larger, evil system.

The Cat's Away. Use a Darklord's defeat to allow characters to have an adventure they couldn't have had otherwise. Perhaps new allies feel emboldened to share information or the guardians of the Darklord's lair are distracted. Use the Darklord's absence as a chance to reveal more about the villain and provide the characters with the tools they need to defeat the Darklord once and for all.

The Darklord's Shadows. The Darklord might be temporarily gone, but their evil isn't. During the Darklord's absence, consider ways the domain might focus more on the characters. Perhaps everyone in the domain whispers about them, wolves are curious about them, zombies flee from them, or the Mists seem to follow them. Cultivate the idea that the Darklord is still watching them or that the characters have violated a taboo.

The Darklord's Return. Determine how the Darklord returns and what they do once they're back. Does the Darklord seek revenge against the party? Is the Darklord more curious about—or obsessed with—the characters (see "Darklord Patrons" below)? Does the Darklord invite the characters to their home, devise a trap for them, or seek to involve them in some broader plot? Or was the Darklord's defeat truly inconsequential, with the characters learning of the villain's return only well afterward?

Darklord Patrons

Most Darklords have lost track of how long they've been prisoners of their domains. Countless times they've failed to achieve their goals, and countless times the Dark Powers have tempted them with hope and opportunity again. Darklords seek new factors that might finally allow them to achieve their desires. And few factors hold more potential to further Darklords' plots—or simply distract them for a time—than the characters.

Darklords might become fascinated by characters, viewing them as potential allies, protégés, tools, or challenges to overcome. In such cases, the Darklord might patronize or test the characters, sending them on quests throughout the Darklord's domain or into the domains of rival Darklords. In return for the characters' aid, the Darklord might offer the characters escape, secrets, or treasures, or the villain might promise not to harm innocents or the characters' allies.

Darklords might serve as typical quest givers, but they tend to be more possessive of their allies. At your discretion, a Darklord's magic might grant all the characters a Dark Gift from those presented in chapter 1. Alternatively, the Darklord might grant characters a sinister supernatural gift.

Darklord Gifts

Darklords might bestow a supernatural gift on characters they've allied with (see "Supernatural Gifts" in the Dungeon Master's Guide for details). These sinister Blessings might be a symbol of a promise made between the Darklord and the recipient, or they might be a reward for the characters' service. A character must accept a Darklord's Blessing to receive it. The Blessing can be removed by the Remove Curse spell, or the Darklord might revoke it anytime.

The following Blessings are examples of those a Darklord might bestow upon a character. Customize them to create gifts appropriate to specific Darklords.

Mark of Beasts

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

On granting this Blessing, the Darklord chooses a Beast associated with themself. While you are in the same domain as the Darklord, Beasts of that kind are Friendly toward you. Additionally, you can use this Blessing to cast Speak with Animals to communicate with this kind of Beast only. Once you cast this spell in this way, you can't cast it again until you finish a Long Rest.

Mark of the Dread Lord

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

While in the same domain as the Darklord who gave you this Blessing, you can cast Fear. Once you cast this spell in this way, you can't cast it again until you finish a Long Rest.

So long as you possess this Blessing, your face is veiled by shadows.

Mark of Obsession

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

Immediately after you take damage from a creature you can see within 10 feet of yourself, you can take a Reaction to force the creature to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has the Frightened condition until the end of your next turn. Once you use this Blessing, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

While you have this Blessing, the Darklord who gave it to you can contact you once every 24 hours. This might take the form of a magical message, such as a Sending spell, or a short letter delivered by mysterious means.

Mark of Sacrifice

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

You can use this Blessing to cast Protection from Evil and Good. Once you cast this spell in this way, you can't cast it again until you finish a Long Rest.

If this Blessing is removed, the Darklord who gave it to you knows your whereabouts, and you have Disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws for 24 hours.

Escaping Ravenloft

The Domains of Dread are as escapable as you please. The Mists might claim characters for a single adventure, then return them home. The characters might be residents of the Lands of the Mists, making escape meaningless. Or escape from Ravenloft might motivate an entire campaign. If you make escape a focus of your campaign, consider the following questions:

Possibility. Is it possible to escape the Domains of Dread against the will of the Dark Powers?

Experts. Who might have knowledge regarding the nature of Ravenloft? What might the characters do to convince them to share their knowledge?

Methods. What methods might allow the characters to escape? Is powerful magic enough, or does the nature of Ravenloft need to be altered? What costs might such methods have?

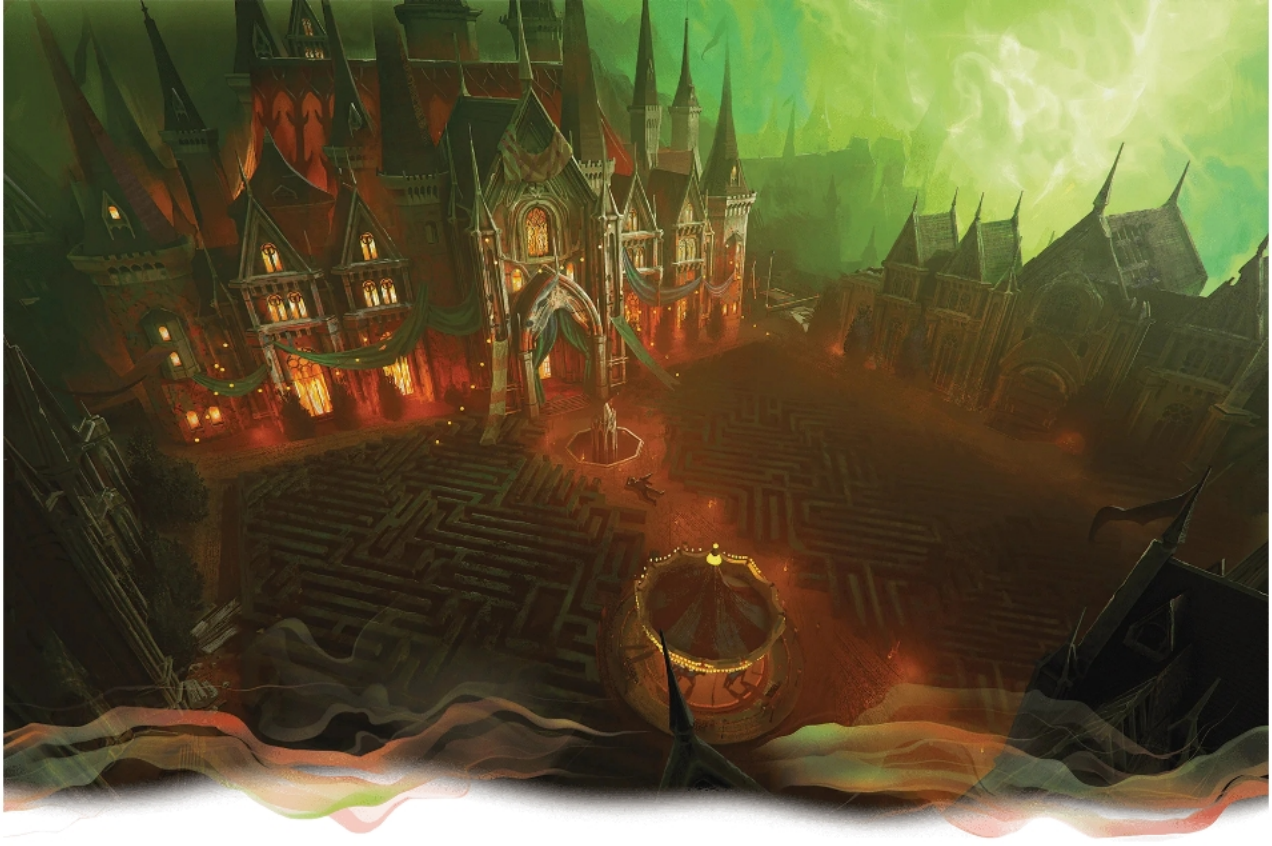
Ramifications. Will the characters' escape only affect them, or will it have ramifications across the Domains of Dread (or the entire multiverse)?

Will. Do the Dark Powers have a role in the characters' escape? Must characters win these mysterious entities' favor or find ways to defy them?

Roll on or choose a result from Escape Adventure Seeds table to inspire adventure or campaign plots involving escape from the Domains of Dread.

Escape Adventure Seeds

1d6	To Escape, the Characters Must...
1	Activate the Rift Spanner, a device fueled by souls stolen by the night hag Styrix.
2	Free Cthulhu, allowing it to escape into the multiverse.
3	Find Azalin Rex and discover how he escaped Darkon.
4	Journey into the past and prevent Strahd von Zarovich from becoming the first Darklord.
5	Sever a Darklord's tie to their domain, freeing the land back into the multiverse.
6	Use the device called the Apparatus to transport their souls into other bodies.



Darklord Ivan Dilisnya invites the objects of his obsessions to share in bizarre diversions at his estate, Degravo

Maihope

Enemies and Allies

This section presents individuals and groups who might appear anywhere in the Lands of the Mists. Such individuals and organizations might create continuity between domains, facilitate travel through the Mists, or provide support to characters. Alternatively, they might serve as opponents capable of confounding characters in multiple domains.

Mist Wanderers

Individuals who travel the Mists might ally with characters or share mysteries that lead to adventures elsewhere in the Domains of Dread.

Alanik Ray

The Great Detective

Alanik Ray is a peerless, elf investigator renowned in multiple domains as a master sleuth and solver of confounding mysteries. Alanik resides in Port-a-Lucine in Dementlieu with his husband, Arthur Sedgwick, but he investigates mysteries and aids sleuths across the Domains of Dread.

Arthur Sedgwick

Pragmatic Investigator

Together with his husband, Alanik Ray, the physician Arthur Sedgwick investigates criminal cases and paranormal mysteries. The practical half of the detective duo, Arthur chronicles their adventures, having published two volumes: *The Life of Alanik Ray* and *The Casebook of Alanik Ray.*

Ez d'Avenir

Fearless Adventurer

As a former pupil of Dr. Rudolph van Richten, Ez d'Avenir (detailed in chapter 5) is no stranger to the dangers haunting the Mists. Since venturing out on her own, Ez has gained a reputation as a skilled monster hunter and foe of evil. She often allies herself with other adventurers to put an end to evils.

Firan Zal'honan

Scholar of Sinister Secrets

The arrogant scholar Firan Zal'honan seeks the secrets underpinning the Domains of Dread. He plots to use his discoveries to escape the Mists into the "true realities" beyond. Firan hires agents to aid in his expeditions or to ferry him through the Mists—which he claims want to disrupt his efforts. Secretly Firan has ties to Azalin Rex, the missing Darklord of Darkon, or might be the Darklord in disguise (see chapter 2 for details).

Larissa Snowmane

Domain-Traveling Riverboat Captain

Larissa Snowmane ferries travelers between the Domains of Dread aboard her riverboat, *River Dancer*. Larissa protects those traveling with her. In the most dire circumstance, she uses her mysterious magic, the Dance of the Dead, which can control the dead at the risk of slaying the living. Larissa learned her magic in part from Anton Misroi, Darklord of Souragne. She avoids that swampy domain at all costs.

Larissa Snowmane's ship, River Dancer, navigates the waterways of the Domains of Dread

Sylvain Sarrailh

Savra Sunstar

Dhampir Vampire Hunter

Savra Sunstar is a monster hunter and the dhampir daughter of Jander Sunstar, a vampire hero who saved Savra's mother from an early demise. For her part, Savra despises her father and seeks to slay him. She has devoted her life to hunting vampires and allies herself with like-minded adventurers.

Weathermay-Foxgrove Twins

Paranormal Investigators

The twins Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove (detailed in chapter 5) are tenacious adventurers who follow their family's tradition of slaying monsters and defending the innocent. They reside in Mordent and have learned much from their surrogate uncle, Rudolph van Richten.

Organizations

These organizations span multiple domains.

Church of Ezra

Goal: Seek mercy from an ambivalent god

Adventure Themes: Apathetic congregations, superstitions, witch hunting

Pious souls in multiple domains pray to Ezra, an aloof god who personifies the Mists. Ezra's worshippers appear in congregations with varied (and sometimes conflicting) practices. The church serves largely as a formalization of local superstitions, whether in modest rural temples or urban cathedrals. When common folk give voice to their hopes or seek to ward off evil, they often pray to Ezra.

The Circle

Goal: Vanquish evil through acts of self-sacrifice

Adventure Themes: Bravery, hubris, proof of heroism, quests against evil, tragedy

Bold knights of the Circle quest from the Shadowlands in search of evil. More often than not, though, they find tragic fates. Even successful knights often venture back to the Shadowlands with evidence of their victories, potentially carrying evil back to their homeland. The knights of the Circle provide bold but reckless assistance to other would-be heroes, endlessly seeking to prove their valor.

Keepers of the Feather

Goal: Discover the paranormal and dispel evil

Adventure Themes: Paranormal investigations, occult mysteries, mysticism

The founding members of the Keepers of the Feather are wereravens (see chapter 5) in Barovia who oppose Strahd and whose reach extends to other domains. These Keepers are cautious, hiding their nature and guiding others so as not to jeopardize themselves or the mystical secrets they've gathered over generations. Many aided by these wereravens aren't ever aware of their assistance.

In other realms, mysteries and talismans of the Keepers of the Feather have fallen into the hands of socialites and spiritualists. In social clubs, curious occultists pursue the mysteries of séances, fortune telling, metaphysical theories, and tales of the macabre. Such dabbling is as likely to cause catastrophes as it is to help those in need. These Keepers identify themselves with amulets that mimic the shape of a Barovian relic known as the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind.

Both factions maintain a network of trained ravens that send messages between group members in different domains.

Order of the Guardians

Goal: Destroy or contain cursed items and phenomena

Adventure Themes: Ending curses, exorcisms, supernatural investigations, vault defense

A network of monastic occultists, the Order of the Guardians hunts and destroys dangerous supernatural objects, cursed items, and stranger anomalies. If the Guardians can't destroy dangerous relics, they contain them within hidden, heavily warded vault-monasteries. The Guardians might share goals with characters trying to prevent supernatural dangers, but they might also consider characters who employ dangerous magic to be threats.

Priests of Osybus

Goal: Release Strahd von Zarovich

Adventure Themes: Cult rituals, necromancy, secrets of the Domains of Dread

The Priests of Osybus follow the teachings of a depraved lich and steal souls to transcend death. With their foul immortality, they seek to free Strahd von Zarovich from the Mists, an act they believe will cause the dissolution of the Domains of Dread. This inspires the priests to learn all they can about the deepest mysteries of the Mists. In shadowy cults, they conduct rituals aimed at escaping the Mists. These priests are detailed further in chapter 5.

Ulmist Inquisition

Goal: Destroy the evil that dwells in wicked hearts

Adventure Themes: Ends justifying the means, hunting evil, psionic interrogation

The three branches of the Ulmist Inquisition employ psionic powers to stamp out evil, but their zeal and willingness to peer into others' minds cause people to fear the inquisitors as much as the villains they oppose. Cells of the Ulmist Inquisition often ally with the Church of Ezra and oppose the priests of Osybus. Ulmist inquisitors might side with adventurers against evil, but they often test the virtue of their allies' souls. These inquisitors are detailed further in chapter 5.

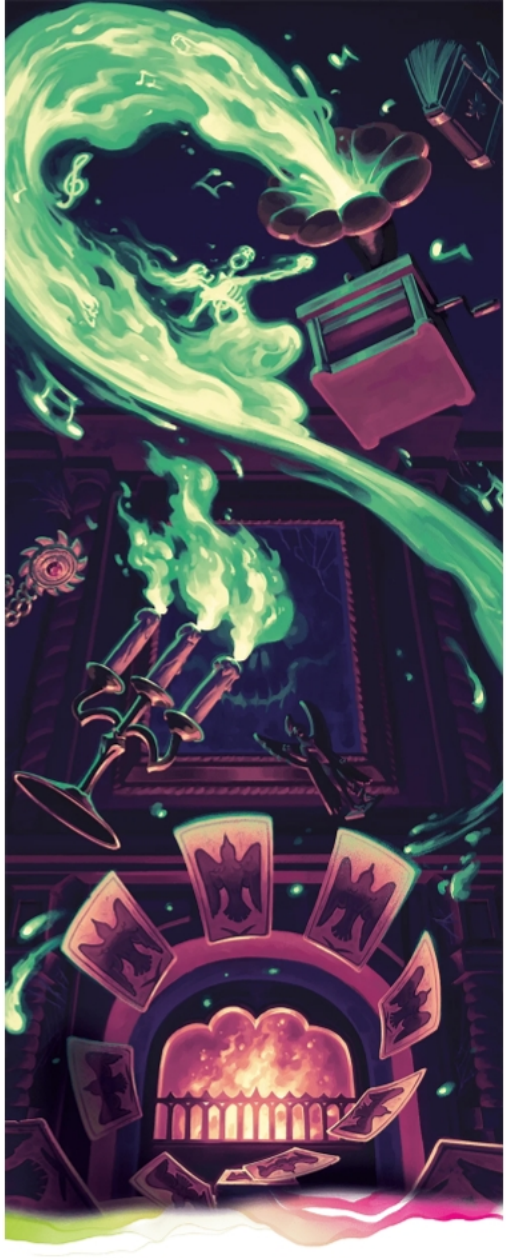
Vistani

Goal: Find a way home, preserve age-old traditions, predict and avoid dangers in the Mists

Adventure Themes: Reliable guides, stories from various lands, travel between domains

Known throughout the Land of the Mists, Vistani (singular: Vistana) have a unique understanding of the Domains of Dread and the hidden paths between them. Following itinerant traditions, many Vistani and their adopted family members travel between domains, learning of distant lands, the many faces of evil, and strange wonders. Vistani never linger in one domain for long, as they endlessly seek a path to their legendary homeland.

Horror Atmosphere



Light, music, and props all contribute to a frightful atmosphere

Alejandro Pacheco

Frightful D&D adventures benefit from a game atmosphere that reinforces the horrifying plot. Consider these elements to influence your game's atmosphere, customizing what you can and not fretting about what you can't:

Location. Strive to play in an area with minimal distractions that all players are comfortable in. Reduce distracting stimuli by turning off unnecessary screens and removing nongame materials.

Lighting. Dimming the lights can cause distractions to fade and create an eerie ambiance in your game space. You can also adjust the lighting to reflect a setting's light level, if it's easy for you to do so. However, always ensure the players have enough light to read by.

Music. You can use music to reinforce an adventure's mood. Create playlists in advance, choosing options without lyrics and that aren't recognizably tied to popular media. If you can subtly control volume, slowly raise it when you want attention and lower it when players are talking. Experiment with how volume and tempo influence the mood of a scene.

Props. Props and handouts are useful but shouldn't become chores or distractions. They might be as simple as a whiteboard for notes or a handwritten letter from a Darklord. Ravenloft has a history of featuring props in its adventures, such as the tarokka deck (see appendix A).

Horror Roleplaying

Consider the following methods to develop a sense of dread during your horror adventurers.

Describing Horror

Rather than just naming a threat, inspire your players' imaginations by describing the horror indirectly using the following techniques:

Before It Arrives. Foreshadow the horror's approach. How do the environment, nearby animals, the weather, or shadows react to it?

Approaches. What sounds does the horror make as it moves? What parts do characters see before the whole comes into view?

Up Close. What does the horror smell like? How does it breathe? Does the air around it grow cold?

Attacks. How does the horror attack? What does damage from it feel like? When it grabs a character, what does it feel like? Does it have physical weapons, or is it a supernatural force that warps other life?

Wounded. When the horror is wounded, how does it react? What does its blood look like? What is inside it?

Horror Pacing

Not everything can be scary, and continuous terror is unsustainable. Before players grow numb to endless tension, create opportunities for them to catch their breath and regain a feeling of calm. The best horror adventures are like roller coasters, ratcheting up suspense and releasing it before building toward the next harrowing moment.

Idle Uneasiness

Occasionally slow your adventure's pace to draw out tension. Linger on describing details. Ask players to describe what their characters are thinking or feeling, or ask what the players think is the worst possible thing that could happen right now. Describe feelings of being watched. Let characters respond to these stray thoughts. Sometimes these impressions should just be their nervousness getting to them. But sometimes it's the calm before a threat strikes.

Let Players Fill Gaps

Invite players to turn their imaginations against themselves. Ask players to fill in details with questions like these: What does the way it moves remind you of? It emits the worst smell—what is it? Something on the shelf reminds you of a nightmare—what is it? Players' responses don't need to control the narrative; it's up to you whether these responses are true or just the characters' perceptions.

Mood Modeling

Model the behaviors you want players to emulate by focusing on the game, letting others speak in turn, heading off encroachment on boundaries, and complimenting exciting choices. Stand or pace during intense moments. Speak faster or anxiously when something scary is happening. Raise your voice during pitched battles, and whisper during tense or conspiratorial moments. Allow yourself to sound uncertain, correct yourself, or pause as if you heard something outside. Ask players, "Are you sure?" By engaging with the suspenseful atmosphere you want to create, you bring it into being at the table.

Out of Time

When the time for action comes, make your narration urgent. Speak quickly and in short bursts. Focus less on senses and more on descriptions—a splash of crimson, who knows where it came from? Politely demand players react quickly: "There's no time to debate—what do you do?"

Reliability and Trust

Reliability and trust are just as important to your horror adventures as lurid shocks. Frequent betrayals can make players hesitant, so emphasize that certain people and locations are trustworthy through repeated positive encounters.

End on Cliffhangers

Leave players excited to play again. When ending a session, implement one of the following to conclude on a cliffhanger: Hint at a new threat, impose a complication on existing plans, increase the stakes, introduce a new mystery, have a foe appear, have the world change, or otherwise shock the characters. Then call for a break before players can react.

Haunted Bastions

The rules for Bastions in the Dungeon Master's Guide allow characters to establish sanctuaries to rest and accrue resources between adventures, but these redoubts aren't outside the grasp of the Mists.

Bastions in the Mists

Bastions in the Domains of Dread work well in campaigns that focus on a single domain or where Darklords aren't likely to seal their domains' borders and cut characters off from their Bastions.

Characters can create Bastions in any domain. The domains of Borca, Darkon, Lamordia, Mordent, and the Shadowlands are well suited to hosting Bastions due to their large size or aloof Darklords. Consider having characters inherit one or more existing structures—such as a ruined fortress, secluded tower, or house recently scoured of ghosts. Should characters adopt such a structure, they can refurbish it to their specifications.

How Darklords respond to Bastions is up to you, but don't create plots that are hostile to Bastions. Darklords might ignore a Bastion, be curious about it, or use it as one more way to bind characters within their domains.

The Dark Powers might intrude on any sanctuary, even characters' personal Bastions

Erel Maatita

Haunted Bastions

Haunted Bastions are afflicted by unusual supernatural events. These might be unpredictable annoyances at first, but clever characters might turn hauntings to their advantage.

If you use this system, the first special facility characters create in their Bastion is Haunted. A Haunted special facility has the following rules:

Irreplaceable. A Haunted special facility can't be replaced until it is no longer Haunted.

Repeating. While there is at least one Haunted special facility in a Bastion, whenever a character gains a new special facility or replaces a special facility with a different one, roll any die; on an even result, that new facility is Haunted.

When a character issues an order to a Haunted special facility or a Maintain order to their whole Bastion, roll 1d6; on a 1, roll on the Bastion Hauntings table and refer to the "Haunting Descriptions" section to see what happens. A Bastion can experience only one haunting per Bastion turn.

Bastion Hauntings

1d100	Haunting
01-07	Cursed Hireling
08-15	Free-Roaming Spirit
16-22	Friendly Ghost
23-29	Hidden Room
30-38	Lightning Storm
39-47	Living Dead
48-55	Mist Wanderers
56-63	Mysterious Priest
64-71	Ill Luck
72-79	Poltergeist
80-86	Spacial Warp

1d100	Haunting
87-93	Spectral Vision
94-100	Vistani Visitors

Haunting Descriptions

The hauntings from the Bastion Hauntings table are detailed here in alphabetical order.

Cursed Hireling. One of your Bastion's hirelings is cursed. As long as the hireling remains cursed, it won't leave the special facility it manages, and any work conducted in that facility takes twice as long to complete.

Free-Roaming Spirit. A random special facility in your Bastion becomes Haunted. If all the special facilities in the Bastion are already Haunted, the DM rolls again on the Bastion Hauntings table.

Friendly Ghost. A benevolent spirit possesses a hireling of the DM's choice. If the special facility where the hireling works produces items or Gold Pieces, it produces twice as much as usual as long as the hireling remains possessed. The spirit departs after 14 days.

Hidden Room. The spirits reveal a hidden closet within your Bastion. Add a 5-foot-square space to your Bastion. Something might lie inside, at the DM's discretion.

Lightning Storm. Trade orders issued this turn have no effect (including one that triggered this haunting, if applicable). If you have a Lightning Generator special facility, this Bastion Haunting has no effect.

Living Dead. A group of mindless undead shamble from the Mists. The Attack Bastion event occurs, but roll 3d6 for that event rather than 6d6.

Mist Wanderers. The Mists rise and 1d4 strangers emerge, seeking shelter. If there is room in your Bastion, they join as hirelings. Otherwise, they linger for 1d4 days before vanishing into the Mists.

Mysterious Priest. A hooded priest appears at the Bastion, attracted by its haunting. Roll any die. One of the following occurs based on whether you rolled an even or an odd number on the die:

Inquisitor (Even). The priest is a witch hunter. If you have an Ancient Altar, Arcane Study, Cabinet of Curiosities, or Séance Parlor in your Bastion, the priest destroys it and you must replace it with a different special facility. If your Bastion has none of these facilities, the Extraordinary Opportunity Bastion event occurs.

Exorcist (Odd). The priest is an exorcist. If you have a Reliquary, Sacristy, Sanctuary, or Sanctum in your Bastion, the priest offers to remove a haunting from one facility. If you agree, choose one Haunted facility; that facility is no longer Haunted.

Ill Luck. Accidents and bad luck plague your Bastion. Harvest orders issued this turn have no effect (including one that triggered this haunting, if applicable).

Poltergeist. Disruptive happenings plague the Bastion. Empower and Research orders issued this turn have no effect (including one that triggered this haunting, if applicable).

Spatial Warp. The nature of a Bastion special facility changes. Roll 1d4. On a 4, replace one of your Bastion's special facilities with another for which you qualify; otherwise, increase the size of a Cramped special facility in your Bastion to Roomy or a Roomy one to Vast, at no cost.

Spectral Vision. A ghostly vision of a past event plays out. You gain some insight into the spirits that haunt your Bastion or the history of the surrounding land, as though affected by the Legend Lore spell.

Vistani Visitors. Vistani travelers visit your Bastion, drawn by tales of the spirits that inhabit it. In return for a night's shelter, they offer to reveal your fate via a casting of the Augury spell or through a tarokka reading (see appendix A). If you turn them away, they depart, but the highest-level special facility in your Bastion that isn't already Haunted becomes Haunted.

Special Facilities

Characters can create the following special facilities in addition to those in the Dungeon Master's Guide. These facilities are summarized on the Special Facilities table.

Special Facilities

Level	Special Facility	Prerequisite	Order
5	Rookery	None	Craft
5	Séance Parlor	None	Research
9	Ancient Altar	None	Empower
9	Cabinet of Curiosities	None	Trade
9	Infirmary	Proficiency in the Medicine skill	Craft
13	Lightning Generator	None	Empower
13	Spirit Vault	None	Research
17	Liminal Space	None	Recruit

Spirits and grim secrets haunt Bastions in the Demiplanes of Dread

Pedro Cardoso

Chapter 4: Creating Domains of Dread

A hexblood witch in the domain of Tepest conjures visions of adventurers' fatal fates

Sean A. Murray

Any fear might find terrible life amid the Domains of Dread. Each domain highlights its own distinctive terror or flavor of the macabre. Chapter 2 presents numerous Domains of Dread and their respective Darklords, but you can blend legendary evils, unexpected monstrosities, and grim settings into your own horrifying creations.

This chapter explores how to create a Domain of Dread, starting with defining its Darklord, the villain at the domain's heart. Descriptions of various genres of horror also provide details to guide and inspire your creations.

Tarokka and Random Tables

This section provides random tables compatible with the tarokka deck (see appendix A). Here's how to use the tarokka deck—or playing cards—instead of a d10 to generate random results:

1: Remove the High Deck. Remove all high deck cards, leaving only cards numbered one through nine plus the master of the suit.

2: Draw a Card. Ensure the deck is well shuffled, then draw from the top.

3: Consult a Table. Reference the card's number to find your result on a table; in the tarokka deck, the master of a suit counts as a ten.

When using the tarokka deck, you can let the card's suit add extra dimension to your results. The four of coins might encourage you to link that aspect of the Darklord to wealth, while the four of swords could provide an interpretation rooted in violence. Appendix A details interpretations of the tarokka deck's cards.

Creating a Darklord

Domains are reflections of and prisons for the Darklords they confine. To devise a Domain of Dread, first consider its central antagonist and prisoner: its Darklord. The following sections detail how to develop a Darklord as a focal antagonist in your horror adventures.

Building Your Darklord

A Darklord's memories, desires, mistakes, and evil deeds shape a domain and its inhabitants. This chapter presents tables with suggested questions and motifs related to a Darklord's past and personality. Choose or randomly generate prompts to develop your Darklord further, or use the table entries as inspiration.

To build a Darklord, follow these steps:

Step 1: Choose Genres. What horror genres does your Darklord fit into? Use those genres' principles to help develop your Darklord.

Step 2: Determine Their Past. Who was the Darklord before they turned to irredeemable evil? What ambitions and flaws drove them to commit heinous acts? How did the Darklord first attract the attention of the Dark Powers? The "Darklord's Past" section provides a multitude of prompts to inspire your Darklord's origin story.

Step 3: Determine Their Identity. What monstrous form does your Darklord's evil take? Turn to each genre chosen in step 1, then consult that genre's respective "Villain Identities" and "Villain Torments" sections. Feel free to mix and match the tables from different genres to achieve your desired feel.

Genres of Horror

Horror stories span a wide variety of genres. One tale might explore the grotesque, warping flesh and bone into perversions of the living; another might be fantastical and philosophical, using restless ghosts to examine the nature of the soul.

Before you begin building a Darklord, consider which genres of horror you'd like to explore. The Genres of Horror table describes the six major genres of horror explored later in this chapter and their common motifs. If you're uncertain where to start, use the table to identify which motifs interest, excite, or inspire fear in you. The sections later in the chapter also detail each genre's core principles, which drive how you develop the Darklord, the domain, and the adventures within.

These genres aren't mutually exclusive. Feel free to blend themes from different genres to create a unique and terrifying story. The end of this chapter briefly describes a handful of additional genres for consideration.

Genres of Horror

Genre	Characters in Stories of This Genre...	Common Motifs
Body horror	Explore the unpredictability of flesh.	Gore, loss of bodily autonomy, parasitic infestations
Cosmic horror	Face incomprehensible insignificance.	Faceless terrors, infinite voids, unblinking eyes
Dark fantasy	Battle grim evils and wicked magic.	Antiheroes, evil witchcraft, misty forests
Folk horror	Unmask ancient taboos and traditions.	Cryptic legends, masked cults, secluded towns
Ghost stories	Examine mortality and tragic histories.	Decrepit mansions, incorporeal haunts, old ruins
Gothic horror	Confront passions and evils within.	Ancient castles, strong emotions, tarnished splendor

Darklord's Past

Every Darklord has committed irredeemable acts that attract the attention of the Dark Powers. Yet Darklords are still individuals who, at one point, had a home, childhood, and family. The following sections each examine a different aspect of the Darklord's life prior to imprisonment.

Past Life

What circumstances and choices pushed the Darklord down their twisted path? Choose or randomly generate at least three questions from the Past Life table to answer. If you generate the same question again, use the question one above or below the entry instead.

Past Life

1d10	Question
1	Does the Darklord feel that they have any hope of redemption? Do they want it?
2	How did the Darklord react when challenged?
3	What ideal or philosophy governs the Darklord's greater actions?
4	What locations and circumstances shaped the Darklord's adolescence?
5	What pushed the Darklord to continue committing heinous acts?
6	What person, place, or object does the Darklord desire most?
7	What was the first depraved act the Darklord committed?
8	Whose respect did the Darklord crave?
9	Who hurt the Darklord?

1d10	Question
10	Who loved the Darklord?

Dark Catalyst

Negative emotions can twist one's ideals into something sinister. Choose or randomly generate at least one prompt from the Dark Catalyst table to develop what encouraged the Darklord's corruption.

Dark Catalyst

1d10	Something in the Darklord's Past...
1	Caused them to obsess over control.
2	Celebrated the Darklord's heinous activities.
3	Drove them toward bloodthirsty revenge.
4	Enabled their indulgence and vices.
5	Escalated their violent tendencies.
6	Fueled an all-consuming fear of loss.
7	Pushed them to turn to a greater power.
8	Removed their empathy for others.
9	Sowed paranoia, encouraging them to constantly test their allies' loyalty.
10	Spurred them to pursue perfection.

Wicked Ambitions

All Darklords have a core ambition or goal that drives them to commit evil acts. These unobtainable goals fueled their corruption and motivate the Darklords' conflicts with adventurers in their domains. Choose or randomly generate such a goal from the Wicked Ambitions table.

Wicked Ambitions

1d10	The Darklord...
1	Seeks an apprentice or inheritor.
2	Explores ways to forget the past.
3	Longs for divine or otherworldly power.
4	Pursues ways to relieve themself of loneliness.
5	Relentlessly pursues the reincarnation of a loved one.
6	Searches for an object or artifact.
7	Seeks vengeance against a person or ideal.
8	Struggles to cheat death.
9	Wants to be a hero—but one who is twisted to the extreme.
10	Wishes to be beautiful and admired.

Intervention of the Dark Powers

Consider how the Darklord attracted the attention of the Dark Powers. On the completion of an act of remarkable depravity, the Mists claim the Darklord—and perhaps their home—imprisoning them in a new Domain of Dread. The deed that ultimately causes a villain to be claimed by the Mists needn't be devastating, but it should represent an evil novel enough for the Dark Powers to take note. Use the Darklords' tales from chapter 2 to inspire how a Darklord might be claimed by the Mists.

Birth of a Darklord

Now trapped in a domain tailor-made to be their prison, the Darklord is immortal, and their greatest desire is just out of reach. At this point, you should have an idea of who the Darklord is, what they did, what form their evil takes, and how they came to the attention of the Dark Powers.

Now consider how the Darklord's evil manifests in their domain and how it brings them into conflict with the adventurers and the domain's inhabitants.

Monstrous Identities

Some Darklords undergo harrowing transformations on their imprisonment, as the Dark Powers warp those Darklords' forms to reflect their evil. Alternatively, the Darklord might have been a monster to begin with, or perhaps they gained their form and powers through their deeds or a curse.

Consider how your Darklord is viewed by inhabitants of their domain. Reference the genres of horror that your Darklord fits into (later in this chapter), and use a genre's "Villain Identities" and "Villain Torments" sections to shape the Darklord's monstrousness. The "Villain Identities" sections provide options for the Darklord's primary identity or form while within their domain, while the "Villain Torments" sections provide torturous twists that the Dark Powers might employ to torment the Darklord and reflect their evil.

Finishing Touches

The story of a Darklord entwines with those of the adventurers and the domain itself. As you finish fleshing out your Darklord's details, consider the following options to further connect the Darklord to their domain and the adventures within it.

Endless Torment. In every domain, its Darklord's greatest desire remains in view but ever out of reach. How does your Darklord's torment remain central to and unignorable in the story?

Misty Borders. The Mists of Ravenloft surround each Domain of Dread. The Dark Powers afford Darklords some control over the Mists bordering their domains. Does your Darklord allow the Mists to function undisturbed, or do the Mists also reflect the Darklord's nature, perpetuating the cycle of torment?

Supporting Cast. Consider what NPC types support the Darklord, exacerbate their threat, or oppose them. How do the inhabitants of the domain play into the Dark Powers' plans, taking the Darklord's situation from bad to worse?

Creating a Domain

Domains of Dread might be any size or shape and can draw inspiration from any horror genre

Chris Seaman

Once you've developed a terrifying Darklord, start shaping that Darklord's unique Domain of Dread. Everything in this realm is inspired by the Darklord's torment or personalized to it.

This section provides guidelines to help you create a suitably terrifying and tragic Domain of Dread.

Building a Domain

Similar to building a Darklord, you can choose or randomly generate prompts from the tables below to flesh out the domain's details.

To build a Domain of Dread, follow these steps:

Step 1: Choose Genres. Most Domains of Dread are inspired by the same horror genres that shape their imprisoned Darklord, but feel free to mix in new genre elements.

Step 2: Develop Details. What are the distinctive elements of the domain? How do these elements reflect and twist the Darklord's past, furthering the Darklord's torment? The "Dread Details" section contains several tables with prompts to tailor your domain to its central prisoner.

Step 3: Create Adventures. What adventures will the characters have in this domain? Turn to the genres chosen in step 1, and consult their "Adventure Hooks" and "Adventure Settings" sections to inspire your adventures.

Step 4: Choose Monsters. The genres later in this chapter each include a table suggesting a plethora of monsters that suit the genre's sensibilities. Consult those monster tables, and choose which terrifying creatures will haunt the characters in the domain. If none of the suggested monsters fit your ideas, you can reskin or alter the suggested monsters or choose ones that do.

Dread Details

The domain's buildings, natural elements, landmarks, and creatures reflect the Darklord's vile past. This section provides prompts for developing elements of your domain and connecting those specifics to the imprisoned Darklord.

Don't get bogged down with the particulars of a working society. Things like weather, ecosystems, and agriculture needn't follow logic in a domain. Mundane details can fade into the background as your adventures focus on the domain's threats.

Domain Elements

Above all else, a domain is a torturous prison for its Darklord. Visceral sights, sounds, and smells within the domain should hint at the Darklord's past villainy or serve as a means for the Dark Powers to torment the domain's central prisoner.

Choose or randomly generate at least three questions from the Domain Elements table to answer. If you generate the same question again, use the question one above or below the entry instead. Don't be afraid to combine details in unexpected ways—the more unnatural or off-putting, the better.

Domain Elements

1d10	Question
1	What sounds, smells, colors, or symbols pervade the domain?
2	Where do the Mists appear besides the domain's borders? What shapes and sounds haunt the Mists in and near the domain?
3	What is visible in the sky? Is there a day-and-night cycle? What's the weather like?
4	What is the domain culture's general attitude toward the Darklord?
5	What does the domain culture fear or consider taboo?
6	What does the domain culture celebrate?
7	What is scarce in the domain, and how do the inhabitants compensate for this?
8	What do buildings in the domain look like? Are they new or old?
9	What biome is the domain's environment (e.g., arctic, desert, forest)?
10	What justifications do the inhabitants use, if any, to pretend nothing is wrong in the domain?

Darklord's Shadows

A domain's features are constant, painful, and symbolic reminders of the Darklord's wicked past. Choose or randomly generate at least one prompt from the Darklord's Shadows table to develop how the domain reflects the Darklord's history. Consider connecting the results to your answers to the questions in "Domain Elements."

Darklord's Shadows

1d10	The Domain Reflects...
1	A taboo the Darklord broke.
2	Someone the Darklord killed.
3	Someone or something the Darklord loved—and lost.
4	Esoteric knowledge the Darklord sought but couldn't obtain.
5	A tradition sacred to the Darklord's home.
6	An act of extreme violence the Darklord committed.
7	The Darklord's greatest temptation.
8	Someone the Darklord betrayed.
9	The Darklord's greatest fear.
10	Evidence of the Darklord's vilest act.

Unleash Your Horror

At this point, you should have a wealth of information about your Darklord and their domain. Review your notes, connect elements, establish recurring themes, and consider ways to foreshadow circumstances that adventures might focus on. You don't need to have answers for every question now; you can define many details during adventures or by focusing on elements your players gravitate toward. For examples of fully detailed Darklords and domains, see chapter 2.

Genres of Horror

The following sections provide overviews of several genres of horror. Use these to inspire adventures, Darklords, and Domains of Dread of your own creation or to further detail the domains presented in chapter 2. Mix and match elements from different genres to create your own uniquely terrifying combinations.

Body Horror

Ivan Shavrin

Body horror examines the fear of our failing anatomies. Tales in this genre explore the unpredictability of flesh—that robust health might be an illusion and that we might be incubating what will devour us. Examples include *Alien* and *The Fly*.

Body Horror Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains with body horror themes:

Depth of Transformation. Physical transformations are common and might affect more than bodies. Objects, architecture, and the natural world might be also anthropomorphized.

Flesh Aberrations. Characters suffer aberrant or excessive growth, whether of organs, discordant appendages, or unnatural materials.

Gore Is a Byproduct. Though gore might take center stage in body horror stories, it's often a side effect of stories about fear of change, difference, mortality, physical harm, or disease.

Gore Isn't Required. Body horror doesn't need to be messy. Swapping bodies, turning to stone, or gaining one's ideal form might feature in this genre.

Real Disabilities Aren't Horrifying. Body horror has a history of portraying disability as monstrous. Avoid this trope.

Body Horror Villains

A physical transformation doesn't make someone a villain. Villains in body horror adventures cultivate evil in tandem with the aberrant transformations afflicting their form and surroundings.

Villain Identities

Villains of this genre are often tragic figures, whether they're cultists enduring forced metamorphosis or scientists trying to extend their lives. Choose from or roll on the Body Horror Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Body Horror Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	An abandoned homunculus made in the image of its creator's child.
2	A scientist who, hoping to keep their spouse alive, grafts their spouse to their own body.
3	A fungal mass that grows more intelligent with every sapient life it engulfs.
4	A guardian angel possessed by the vile blood of the demons it has slain.
5	A dying ruler obsessed with creating a new body so they can continue their reign.
6	A cancer possessed by the mind of a dead mage that seeks to regrow their body.
7	A monarch who feeds their cannibal children, no matter the cost.
8	The priests of a forgotten god, who try to raise their deity from the faithful's flesh.
9	A house that remembers its tenants and will do anything to regain them.
10	A grieving mortician who sculpts every face they encounter into that of their lost love.

Villain Torments

Villains in this genre simultaneously draw power from and are tormented by supernatural and physiological aberrance. Choose from or roll on the Body Horror Torments table to determine what abhorrent affliction plagues the villain.

Body Horror Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Possesses a bestial mouth in their torso.
2	Is pockmarked with eyes that never close.
3	Grows tooth-filled cysts on their limbs.
4	Is plagued by an ever-growing fungal mass sprouting from their extremities.
5	Restitches their body together.
6	Has parasites writhing beneath their skin.
7	Can dissolve their physical form at will.
8	Is gravid with bulbous egg sacs.
9	Aches with a ceaseless hunger.
10	Can't control their transformation into a beast and back.

Body Horror Adventures

Adventures in body horror realms often become tests of endurance, whether characters are attempting to hold out until rescue arrives or endeavoring to mount a rescue themselves. Alternatively, adventures might have an investigative feel, requiring the heroes to uncover the dark secret that lies beneath the mundane.

Adventure Hooks

Body horror plots often explore the unpredictability of life and discordance between mind and body. Choose from or roll on the Body Horror Plots table to inspire your body horror adventures.

Body Horror Plots

1d10	Adventure Plots
1	A malevolent curse is transforming the village's children into misshapen statues.
2	Guests of a popular local dinner party keep succumbing to autophagia.
3	Corpses of beasts—mutated and halfway human—are left at the forest's edge.
4	Every night, one townsperson melts.
5	Fiends have infiltrated a community by wearing the corpses of the deceased.
6	Fleshy catacombs open beneath a town.
7	A neighborhood is filled with derelict houses composed entirely of mimics.
8	The corpse of a monstrous leviathan has washed ashore, entrails still moving.

1d10	Adventure Plots
9	A virulent infestation uses the townsfolk as incubators for giant insects.
10	Something is stealing the tongues of the city guards.

Adventure Settings

Body horror can occur anywhere, from mundane settings to unsettling locales. Choose from or roll on the Body Horror Settings table to inspire locations for your adventures.

Body Horror Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	A vine-covered, ostensibly abandoned prison or asylum.
2	The cavernous gut of a dead behemoth.
3	A sprawling university, older than the town surrounding it.
4	A city of red muscle, with bleeding eyes embedded in hair-strangled buildings.
5	A forest of burnt pines draped in gore.
6	A derelict laboratory with old experiments floating in containment tubes.
7	A slaughterhouse, larger than it appears on the outside and full of victims.
8	A suddenly empty mortuary.
9	An old church sitting astride a warren of ancient tunnels.
10	A vibrant garden sprouting from a mound of putrid corpses.

Body Horror Monsters

Any monster might become the focus of a body horror plot. Know what your players anticipate so you can distort those expectations. A poised elf revealed to be a husk puppeted by sapient worms can prove as frightening as any eldritch horror. The Body Horror Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Body Horror Monsters

CR	Creature
1/8	Slaad Tadpole
1/2	Bodytaker Podling*
1	Carrionette*
2	Gibbering Mouther, Intellect Devourer
3	Carrion Stalker,* Doppelganger, Grell
4	Black Pudding, Strigoi*
5	Flesh Golem, Red Slaad
6	Medusa, Zombie Clot*
7	Blue Slaad, Bodytaker Plant,* Necrichor,* Violet Fungus Necrohulk
8	Chain Devil
10	Aboleth
15	Yithian*
19	Lesser Star Spawn Emissary*
21	Greater Star Spawn Emissary*

*Detailed in chapter 5

Cosmic Horror

Ivan Shavrin

Cosmic horror revolves around the fear of personal insignificance. The genre, inspired by stories of the Cthulhu Mythos, is predicated on the idea of entities so vast and so genuinely beyond our comprehension that we can't fathom their simplest motivations. To see them is to become lost in their magnitude and the evidence that we have never and could never matter to the cosmos at large. Examples include *Annihilation* and *Stalker*.

Cosmic Horror Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains with cosmic horror themes:

Fear the Unknown. Be vague. Cosmic horror emerges through imagination and the indescribable, not through details.

Iconography. Cults, forbidden books, and strange symbols form the cornerstones of cosmic horror.

Inscrutable Forces. Cosmic horror is about alien forces driven by motivations humans can't understand. There is no good or evil, no law or chaos.

Marginalization Isn't Horror. The genre has a history of framing marginalized demographics as monstrous and stigmatizing mental illness. Avoid those tropes.

Remove the Familiar. Cosmic horror makes characters feel gradually unmoored from reality.

Cosmic Horror Villains

Despite the genre's grand magnitude, villains of cosmic horror are still often individual beings. Godlike terrors and inscrutable forces might pull the strings with their unknowable goals, but the antagonists the characters face are concrete, fallible people.

Villain Identities

Cosmic horror villains often perpetrate horrors as they strive for outcomes they can't articulate. Choose from or roll on the Cosmic Horror Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Cosmic Horror Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	A smiling minstrel whose music drives listeners to murder.
2	A priest obsessed with creating a shelter safe from the coming apocalypse.
3	A mayor who will do anything to ensure citizens finish a sacred transformation.
4	An astronomer broken and enraptured by what they saw in the stars.
5	A scientist striving to make their body the perfect host for an ageless being.
6	A coroner who believes the bodies they autopsy contain secret messages.
7	The head librarian of an ancient sect, who seeks secrets hidden within their peers.
8	A spoiled noble who intends to raise a cult to feed to residents of an alien dimension.
9	A researcher knowingly incubating a powerful entity within themself.
10	A hierophant seeking a doorway to an alien realm to bring about a new world.

Villain Torments

Villains in this genre are endowed with unnatural powers stemming from their studies or granted by alien forces. Choose from or roll on the Cosmic Horror Torments table to determine what alien or psychological torment plagues the villain.

Cosmic Horror Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Is haunted by otherworldly masters that whisper from reflective surfaces.
2	Sees multiple dimensions at once.
3	Is transforming into a long-extinct being.
4	Screams messages from the far-flung future.
5	Absorbs the words out of books.
6	Drains any object they focus on of all but one portentous color.
7	Finds their body warped to match that of the last person they talked with.
8	Incubates an alien symbiote in their brain.
9	Sleepwalks, drawing the same symbol on every surface they come across.
10	Obsesses over music, shifting their form to embody whatever song they hear.

Cosmic Horror Adventures

Adventures in cosmic horror realms are bleak, desperate affairs, where the best one can hope for is to survive relatively intact. There is no stopping the ultimate evil, but characters might aspire to seal it away temporarily.

Adventure Hooks

Cosmic horror adventures often deal with how alien forces might alter us, perverting our expectations and separating us from what makes us human. Choose from or roll on the Cosmic Horror Plots table to inspire your cosmic horror adventures.

Cosmic Horror Plots

1d10	Adventure Hook
1	A child has gone missing in the impossibly vast space beneath their bed.
2	Something drags a coastal town's inhabitants out in the night, garbs them in silver, and leads them to the surf to drown.
3	A wandering minstrel plays music that robs entire cities of sleep.
4	Local bakers have started making pies filled with a delicious, luminescent, alien, blue goo.
5	A sapient, unholy tome will do anything to reach a group of cultists.
6	The inheritors of an ancient sect are transforming into astral horrors.
7	Animals in the local forest have started going to a specific charred grove to die.
8	Colossal statues surrounding the city move only during dusk and dawn.
9	The characters must survive an evening in a sinking ancestral home.
10	A new wing in the academy's library has appeared, filled with blank books.

Adventure Settings

Cosmic horror frequently takes place in settings that imply access to hidden knowledge or in unnatural, logic-defying dimensions far removed from reality. Choose from or roll on Cosmic Horror Settings table to inspire locations for your adventures.

Cosmic Horror Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	A lavish manor devoid of people—save for staff who swear the lord is busy.
2	A narrow chapel in the woods, whose bell rings ceaselessly.
3	A hidden ward of a decrepit university.
4	A dimension of featureless white, broken up only by staring eyes.
5	The ninth basement beneath an otherwise normal family home.
6	A small inn in the mountains that smells perpetually of brine.
7	An ambulatory forest riddled with carvings of unblinking eyes.
8	A sewage system that predates its city.
9	A coastline slowly being consumed by an obsidian sea.
10	A decrepit lighthouse whose light flickers on at strange intervals.

Cosmic Horror Monsters

Monsters in cosmic horror adventures are often strange beings that enact bizarre changes on their victims. The Cosmic Horror Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Cosmic Horror Monsters

CR	Creature
1/4	Kuo-toa
2	Intellect Devourer, Mimic
3	Brain in a Jar,* Grell, Yuan-ti Malison (Type 1)
5	Vampire Mind Flayer*
7	Mind Flayer, Yuan-ti Abomination
8	Aberrant Cultist, Nightgaunt,* Unspeakable Horror*
9	Mi-Go*
10	Aboleth
11	Shoggoth*
12	Gug*
13	Beholder, Ultroloth
14	Elder Thing*
15	Yithian*
19	Lesser Star Spawn Emissary*
21	Greater Star Spawn Emissary*
23	Blob of Annihilation

*Detailed in chapter 5

Dark Fantasy

Ivan Shavrin

The dark fantasy genre features fantasy worlds where grim themes, nihilistic plots, or horrifying elements inform their stories. Any tale featuring both supernatural elements and horror themes might constitute dark fantasy, whether it's a fantasy story steeped in dread or an otherwise realistic world that features a supernatural terror. Examples include *The Dark Tower* and *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Dark Fantasy Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains with dark fantasy themes:

Evil Sometimes Triumphs. Good doesn't always win. Evil individuals with great power and unopposed schemes might prosper.

Low Magic. Magic and magic items might be rarer or require a bargain or sacrifice to use.

Morally Gray. The lines between good and evil are blurred. Choices involve deciding on the least bad outcome available.

Nefarious Deeds. Corruption and suspicion flourish among organizations and individuals.

Reluctant Heroes. Antiheroes are common—characters tainted by the world's evil or those who refuse to be considered heroes.

Dark Fantasy Villains

Sinister individuals leave their marks on dark fantasy domains, whether with oppressive architecture, unavoidable propaganda, or scars on an exploited environment.

Villain Identities

Villains occupy places of influence in dark fantasy domains. Choose from or roll on the Dark Fantasy Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Dark Fantasy Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	A machine that believes it's a resurrected tyrant and seeks to rebuild its empire.
2	The leader of a subterranean people who plots to blot out the sun's searing light.
3	A high priest intent on shifting an entire nation into their god's realm.
4	A desperate general who unleashes otherworldly war machines.
5	A massive treant who has allied with raiders and seeks to fell every forest.
6	A sage who solves an endless war by preventing anyone from dying.
7	An eternal royal whose immortality relies on the blood of angels.
8	A criminal kingpin who burns opponents into psychoactive spirit dust.
9	An ancient dragon whose godlike magic drains the domain of life.
10	A god who killed all their peers and now rules the mortal realm.

Villain Torments

In dark fantasy adventures, a villain's power is often rooted in the villain's own suffering. Choose from or roll on the Dark Fantasy Torments table to determine how this power tragically works against the villain.

Dark Fantasy Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Uncontrollably damages everything they care about.
2	Manufactures catastrophes to distract from their own ineptitude.
3	Is surrounded by power-hungry spies and saboteurs, fueling the villain's paranoia.
4	Seeks the pleasure of lost glories.
5	Is surrounded by sycophants whose constant praise makes every success feel hollow.
6	Is plagued by a cursed family legacy.
7	Is hounded by rivals and baseless mockery.
8	Must sacrifice those they love to maintain their facade of power.
9	Is praised by society for a deed they never truly accomplished.
10	Elicits excessive fear and reverence, resulting in their isolation.

Dark Fantasy Adventures

Adventures in dark fantasy domains involve desperate or reluctant heroes resisting evil. Even in the grimmest settings, desperation and hope fan the flames of resistance.

Adventure Hooks

Plots in dark fantasy adventures range from street-level depravity to world-ruining conspiracies. Choose from or roll on the Dark Fantasy Plots table to inspire your dark fantasy adventures.

Dark Fantasy Plots

1d10	Adventure Hook
1	A beholder-shaped statue has come to life and begun terrorizing the city.
2	A portal to a demonic realm has opened in the mouth of an innocent acolyte.
3	A sapient virus is turning the inhabitants of a village into shadows.
4	Giant spiders have declared war on all bipedal creatures.
5	A coven plans to use a volcano as a massive cauldron for a catastrophic spell.
6	The nation's beloved monarch was recently revealed to be a lich.
7	A malevolent phantom haunts the moon, raising corpses bathed in its light as undead.
8	A sentient weapon transforms its surroundings into a mockery of the war it last fought in.
9	A factory distills souls into a powerful wish-granting elixir.
10	An expanding labyrinth has just swallowed another neighborhood.

Adventure Settings

Evil is entrenched in dark fantasy domains, reflected by their grandiose adventure locales. Choose from or roll on the Dark Fantasy Settings table to inspire locations for your adventures.

Dark Fantasy Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	The floating and fallen ruins of a magical megastructure.
2	A blood-soaked swamp.
3	A tower that pierces a magical ley line, draining its power.
4	A criminal consortium's lavish academy.
5	A forest where every tree grows from the body of a mummified hero.
6	An empire covered in the watchful religious symbols of an all-seeing deity.
7	A fortress with seven locked gates that seal off the underworld.
8	A country devastated by the fallout of weapons used in an age-old war.
9	A town threatened by an unstoppable, slowly encroaching infection.
10	A city adrift on a sea full of primeval predators.

Dark Fantasy Monsters

Any monster can find a place in a dark fantasy plot. D&D's most iconic threats—such as dragons and beholders—are particularly appropriate to horror-tinged tales, as are any other supernatural foes. The Dark Fantasy Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Dark Fantasy Monsters

CR	Creature
1/4	Goblin Warrior, Sprite
2	Gremishka,* Minotaur Skeleton
3	Displacer Beast, Goblin Hexer, Mist Horror,* Waxwork*
4	Juvenile Shadow Dragon, Shadow Demon
5	Night Hag, Umber Hulk
6	Drider, Ghast Gravecaller
7	Necrichor*
8	Fomorian, Inquisitor of the Mind Fire,* Vampire Nightbringer
10	Yochlol
13	Beholder, Shadow Dragon
15	Purple Worm, Vampire Umbral Lord
17	Death Knight, Dracolich
21	Arch-hag, Lich

*Detailed in chapter 5

Folk Horror

Ivan Shavrin

Folk horror adventures involve traditions, beliefs, and perceptions that are passed down through generations and take terrifying twists. For those who ascribe to hidden traditions, sacrifices to strange gods or placations to lurking monsters are everyday events. For outsiders, though, these practices reveal the subjectivity of normalcy and societal truth. Examples include *Midsommar and The Wicker Man*.

Folk Horror Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains with folk horror themes:

Isolation Begets Weirdness. Strange and potentially dangerous traditions flourish in isolated or private communities.

Perversion of Community. Communities in folk horror stories often are a grim mirror of an aspect of accepted society. They often dramatically use outsiders or purge nonbelievers.

Relative Truth. Beliefs highlighted in folk horror stories might not be true.

Secret Traditions. Community members typically hide their beliefs, perhaps by physically obscuring them or manipulating others in power.

Strangeness in Specificity. Art, symbols, tools, celebrations, and other trappings of belief make a community's traditions more specific and eerie.

Folk Horror Villains

Antagonistic forces in folk horror usually are community leaders—paragons of the strange beliefs central to the horror's narrative. Outsiders might have a chance to adopt the community's ways, but otherwise locals consider them heretics or corrupting elements.

Villain Identities

Folk horror villains are manipulative, leading others to follow inscrutable traditions. Choose from or roll on the Folk Horror Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Folk Horror Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	A secluded temple's high priest who needs to find the perfect sacrifice.
2	An erinyes that appears when youngsters speak a rhyme into a darkened mirror.
3	A night hag that dwells in the dreams of those who drink a special ergot tea.
4	A shape-shifter that takes on the appearance of the last person it fed on.
5	A wicker giant that animates during the new moon, punishing the unwary.
6	A mayor who behaves in archaic ways so villagers don't enrage an ancient ghost.
7	A treant who demands corpses to replace trees cleared by a town's construction.
8	A mysterious robed figure who wears a horned mask and leads a silent cult.
9	A bloodthirsty forest guardian that resembles a deer with two heads.
10	A shadow that appears only when individuals look away from the woods' tree line.

Villain Torments

Folk horror villains have been consumed by the traditions or land they embody, causing them to fail in their duties or their rites to spin out of control. Choose from or roll on the Folk Horror Torments to determine how these twisted traditions torment the villain.

Folk Horror Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Knows the beliefs are false but keeps up the facade to maintain power.
2	Adheres to an ancient faith and desperately works to convert nonbelievers.
3	Seeks to transform their body into a vessel or gate for the subject of their belief.
4	Now appears as a bloodthirsty amalgamation of various forest creatures.
5	Uncontrollably utters prophecies.
6	Is haunted by judgmental ancestral spirits.
7	Can appear only at dawn and dusk.
8	Has partially melded into a hallowed tree.
9	Is being consumed by fungi.
10	Can no longer commune with their deity, driving them to ever bloodier sacrifices.

Folk Horror Adventures

In folk horror tales, characters often discover that their beliefs aren't as universally held as they assumed—and provide no defense against those who reject those beliefs.

Adventure Hooks

Folk horror plots often involve outsiders to a group discovering unsettling practices or traditions. Choose from or roll on the Folk Horror Plots to inspire your folk horror adventures.

Folk Horror Plots

1d10	Adventure Hook
1	Anyone entering the city on horseback is imprisoned and sentenced to death.
2	A cult requests help summoning a demonic force to combat a greater evil.
3	The townspeople protect a violent hag, whom they call "grandmother."
4	After an estate party, the residents adopt the characters, refusing to let them leave.
5	The characters bear an uncanny resemblance to the founders of a secret village.
6	Townsfolk disappear for days before reappearing with missing memories.
7	Strangers hand out wax earplugs to protect others from "the choir."
8	Every night, parents let their children follow floating lights into the forest.
9	Villagers physically can't stop smiling.
10	Anyone who stays in the village overnight loses their shadow to the looming woods.

Adventure Settings

Folk horror stories often take place in isolated or rural areas, but they could be set anywhere insular communities thrive or traditions stagnate. Choose from or roll on the Folk Horror Settings to inspire locations for your adventures.

Folk Horror Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	A copse of dense, blackened woods.
2	A mansion built around a stone circle.
3	A field where paths grow in corridor-like patterns leading to a ruin at the center.
4	A telepathic collective that townsfolk join by ingesting a rare fungus.
5	A hag's hut that stands atop a growing hill of rotten sweets.
6	A glacier that residents never leave.
7	A cavern where the glowing bones of an otherworldly being jut from the walls.
8	A countryside with stretches of hayfields and colorful barns.
9	Rival villages engaged in an age-old war.
10	A deserted chapel that has been burned down and rebuilt a thousand times.

Folk Horror Monsters

Eerie traditions and unnatural alliances with monsters fill folk horror tales. When certain behaviors have taken hold over generations, even the strangest practices and most dangerous beings might be accepted as part of society. The Folk Horror Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Folk Horror Monsters

CR	Creature
1/2	Myconid Adult, Vine Blight
1	Scarecrow
2	Awakened Tree
2	Cultist Fanatic, Will-o'-Wisp
3	Green Hag, Mist Horror,* Werewolf
4	Death's Head Tree*
5	Shambling Mound
7	Tree Blight
8	Death Cultist, Fiend Cultist
9	Jiangshi*
10	Cultist Hierophant, Dullahan*
13	Loup Garou*
16	Gulthias Blight
21	Arch-hag

*Detailed in chapter 5

Ghost Stories

Ivan Shavrin

Ghost stories number among the more psychologically elaborate genres of horror. Only by revealing tales of tragedy and past wrongs can heroes bring peace to forces that share their suffering with the living. Examples include *The Woman in Black* and *The Haunting of Hill House*.

Ghost Story Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains inspired by ghost stories:

Mirror of Humanity. Ghosts are a way to examine the nature of the soul, mortality, and history.

Naive Heroes. Heroes are purehearted or unsuspecting individuals whose resolve is shaken by the story's events. Look for ways to test heroes' psychology with your hauntings.

Resolving a Haunt. Heroes need a way to put spirits to rest. Once you reveal the story, ensure the way to combat the haunting is clear.

Specificity. Even the smallest details can reveal a haunting's story. A simple locket or portrait might contain clues that explain a haunting.

Ties to the Living. Personal ties give ghost stories weight. Consider connecting the heroes to spirits in ways they won't predict, such as making a phantasmal villain a hero's ancestor.

Ghost Story Villains

In ghost stories, spirits often represent instruments of supernatural justice, causing those responsible for their deaths to suffer. Spirits also can represent grief and the need for closure.

Villain Identities

While the villains in ghost stories are often spirits or haunted places, they also could be the individuals who provoked a haunting to begin with. Choose from or roll on the Ghost Story Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Ghost Story Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	A medium who gains power over spirits by feeding victims to them.
2	The spirit of a long-dead murderer who continues to kill in death.
3	A ghostly ancestor who refuses to relinquish control of their kin.
4	A priest who marks the unworthy for sacrifice to the cathedral's hungry spirits
5	A phantom rider who sweeps through the village, stealing away the living.
6	An unbound spirit that repeatedly manifests in victims' nightmares.
7	The capricious phantasm of an amoral accident victim who torments the living.
8	The spirit of a former tyrant who demands sacrifices from their old domain.
9	A ghost hunter who inflicts hauntings on clients—then charges to remove the spirits.
10	The spirit of an evil captain who lurks near their wrecked vessel, sabotaging passing ships.

Villain Torments

Whether they're living monsters or ghosts, villains in ghost stories are the architects of their own tragedies. Choose from or roll on the Ghost Story Torments table to determine how the villain's past painfully manifests.

Ghost Story Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Can't touch anyone without stealing a precious memory.
2	Can temporarily release spirits from the villain's elaborate scars.
3	Is hounded by spirits that each represent an emotion the villain can no longer feel.
4	Drains the life from any animal they see.
5	Has lost the ability to feel physical sensation.
6	Can be seen only in reflective surfaces.
7	Is bound within a building; leaving would permanently destroy them.
8	Turns to ash in sunlight.
9	Can communicate only through music and writing.
10	Siphons the color from objects they possess.

Ghost Story Adventures

Ghost story adventures deal with learning the story behind a haunting and ultimately resolving it. They benefit from preserving the mystery behind a spirit's motivations until the heroes discover the truth.

Adventure Hooks

Though the structure—learn about a haunting and resolve it—might seem straightforward, ghost story plots can explore philosophical issues like the burden of ancestry and the nature of the soul. Choose from or roll on the Ghost Story Plots table to inspire your ghost stories.

Ghost Story Plots

1d10	Adventure Hook
1	Murder victims linger as ghosts until someone solves their murders.
2	Bloody graffiti keeps appearing on the city's walls.
3	A stubborn miser must visit their haunted family home to put their family to rest.
4	A mob of angry spirits besieges the local temple on the winter solstice each year.
5	The adventurers must solve the murder of a ghost who can say only three words.
6	A ship—with the same name as a vessel lost at sea decades prior—arrives at port.
7	Rumors abound of a ritual allowing a living individual to trade places with the dead.
8	The ghosts of an actor's rivals haunt the local theater.
9	A noble accidentally broke a family urn, unleashing their cruel ancestral spirits.
10	Every full moon, spirits in a graveyard rise to seek vengeance for a mass crime.

Adventure Settings

Ghost stories are intensely personal, and adventures within this genre take place in a setting dripping with tragic history. Choose from or roll on the Ghost Story Settings table to inspire locations for your adventures.

Ghost Story Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	A decrepit mansion where, for years, nobles killed the staff to keep their secrets.
2	A graveyard city-state where all living residents are grave keepers.
3	An opulent yet abandoned library, filled with haunted artifacts.
4	The site of an ancient battle that permanently devastated the land.
5	A nation where the residents observe grueling rituals to appease the angry dead.
6	An expansive forest in which a cruel noble once hunted the poor for sport.
7	A ruined barn where dozens of remarkable animals lost their lives in a fire.
8	A picturesque cliff where visiting couples often mysteriously fall to their deaths.
9	An attic in which a hateful spirit has been sealed for decades.
10	A dilapidated lighthouse overlooking a black-sand beach.

Ghost Story Monsters

Creatures that embody or serve as a response to past tragedies often feature in ghost stories. Don't limit yourself to incorporeal Undead when creating your own hauntings. The Ghost Story Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Ghost Story Monsters

CR	Creature
1/2	Death's Head,* Shadow
1	Animated Armor, Death Dog, Specter
2	Animated Rug of Smothering, Poltergeist
3	Mummy, Swarm of Crawling Claws
4	Banshee, Death's Head Tree,* Ghost
5	Revenant, Wraith
6	Gallows Speaker*
7	Graveyard Revenant
10	Dullahan,* Haunting Revenant
11	Relentless Nightmare*
16	Gulthias Blight

*Detailed in chapter 5

Ivan Shavrin

Gothic horror deals with the terror within. It shatters the illusion of humanity by holding a mirror up to us and forcing us to examine what we truly are and what we pretend to be. In gothic horror, we—not some distant entity—are the architects of our destruction. Examples include *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*.

Gothic Horror Principles

Consider the following principles when creating Darklords and domains with gothic horror themes:

Brave Heroes. Gothic heroes are often virtuous, deeply passionate, or courageous. Adventures should test characters' beliefs and morality.

Foreboding. Atmosphere and a sense of dread are key. Locations are often decrepit or foreboding.

High Emotions. Gothic stories include intense, exaggerated emotions. Romances, rivalries, and life-changing events are common.

Sacrifice. Sacrifices feature prominently in gothic stories. Give characters heart-wrenching choices.

Unassuming, Unrepentant Villains. Gothic villains are unrepentantly evil, but this shouldn't be immediately obvious. Drop hints about your villain's awful secrets before revealing them fully.

Gothic Horror Villains

Though thoroughly wicked, villains in gothic horror tales act reserved or unassuming until they reveal their true nature. Any intriguing figure with a dark secret can serve as a gothic horror villain.

Villain Identities

Gothic villains are most effective when they are slowly revealed as shockingly cruel, immoral, or the antithesis of good. Choose from or roll on the Gothic Horror Villains table to inspire villains appropriate to this genre.

Gothic Horror Villains

1d10	The Villain Is...
1	A reclusive noble who uses their vampiric reputation to terrorize their vassals.
2	A vain socialite who made a bargain with a fell power to retain their youth.
3	A scientist obsessed with creating the perfect poison, machine, or life-form.
4	A beloved magnate who abducts commoners to use in beauty rituals.
5	A celebrity who murders openly but uses their charm to avoid repercussions.
6	Someone who loves a monstrous creature and does anything to keep it safe.
7	A wealthy heir who manipulates the ambitious into committing terrible deeds.
8	A poisoner who seeks to manipulate history through targeted killings.
9	An artist who concocts terrible accidents to inspire their art.
10	A monster hunter who accuses those they consider sinful of being monsters.

Villain Torments

Self-debasement and self-loathing lurk at the heart of gothic villains' evil, whether they indulge in vices or are consumed with misanthropy. Choose from or roll on the Gothic Horror Torments table to determine how temptation and dramatic emotions torment the villain.

Gothic Horror Torments

1d10	The Villain...
1	Inherited unlimited wealth, but all finery they wear turns into ash.
2	Endlessly cries tears of blood.
3	Is covered in tattoos, which magically update to illustrate all their sins.
4	Turns into a lead statue when the sun rises.
5	Is incomparably beautiful, but locals perceive them as a beast.
6	Sees evidence of their impending doom everywhere.
7	Extinguishes any light shone on them.
8	Can't taste food.
9	Curses anyone they dance with.
10	Craves company but is cursed to forever wear a mask and obscure their identity.

Gothic Horror Adventures

The themes of gothic horror adventures center around shattering the lies we trick ourselves into believing. Ominous history, poetic tragedy, and supernatural forces are staples of gothic horror.

Adventure Hooks

The dichotomy between goodness and evil, reckonings for wicked deeds, and dire choices are strong themes in gothic horror plots. Choose from or roll on the Gothic Horror Plots table to inspire your gothic horror adventures.

Gothic Horror Plots

1d10	Adventure Hook
1	The city's rulers secretly are warring hags, wererats, and vampires.
2	A scientist, never seen and known only through their writing, has disappeared.
3	A repentant immortal requests help in losing centuries of painful memories.
4	A beloved social figure turns into a murderous living doll every night.
5	A pair of spirits brings unspeakable tragedy to any romantic couple in town.
6	A generational curse forces villagers to sacrifice themselves.
7	Every night, one random guest of an opulent inn chokes on their own blood.
8	A serial killer impales victims on a certain monument in a cruel mockery of art.
9	Terrible noises sound from a dilapidated mansion; those who visit are never seen again.
10	As the result of abhorrent experiments, blood-drained creatures roam the streets.

Adventure Settings

Gothic horror settings have an underlying sinister air, and encounters often take place in forlorn structures where depravity runs rampant. Choose from or roll on the Gothic Horror Settings table to inspire locations for your adventures.

Gothic Horror Settings

1d10	The Adventure Takes Place In...
1	A lavish garden that siphons life from visitors to maintain its beauty.
2	A ruined cathedral devoted to transforming a prophesied being.
3	A laboratory where preserved body parts carry the minds of their former owners.
4	A forest of eternal night where bloodthirsty creatures live in fragile peace.
5	A rectory where the stained glass windows hold the trapped souls of the pious.
6	A city where all who die are cast in plaster and used to adorn the streets.
7	An island where the inhabitants make sacrifices to avoid eerie transformations.
8	An artist's paradise where cruelties are elevated to terrible and beautiful art forms.
9	A castle in which visitors are transformed into objects or animals.
10	A ruined fortress haunted by a monstrous yet docile creature.

Gothic Horror Monsters

Creatures imbued with tragedy or abominable origins work well in gothic horror adventures. The Gothic Horror Monsters table presents monsters particularly appropriate to such adventures. Unless otherwise noted, creatures in this table appear in the Monster Manual.

Gothic Horror Monsters

CR	Creature
1/4	Zombie
1	Carrionette,* Ghoul
2	Gargoyle, Wererat
3	Vampire Familiar, Werewolf
4	Incubus, Strigoi,* Succubus
6	Priest of Osybus*
8	Inquisitor of the Mind Fire,* Inquisitor of the Sword,* Inquisitor of the Tome,* Vampire Nosferatu*
11	Efreeti
12	Mordenheim's Monster*
13	Loup Garou,* Vampire
17	Death Knight

*Detailed in chapter 5

Ivan Shavrin

In disaster horror, the world has fallen to ruin or it's getting there fast. The unthinkable has happened, and society is collapsing. In these tales, you might replace a monster or villain with cascading catastrophes like those brought about by a meteorite strike or volcanic eruption. Regardless of a hero's power, the best-timed strike or the most powerful spell might not fix a city ruined by an earthquake or a world ravaged by plagues.

Disaster Horror Features

Consider the following principles when creating adventures with disaster horror themes:

Nature of Disaster. The disasters in your horror adventures need not be natural. Magical disruptions, temporal shifts, and violent interplanar rifts might sow supernatural chaos. Wars and relentless monster hordes—including legions of zombies or demons—also can cause domain-changing ruin.

Society's Downfall. In disaster horror, society breaks down. Inns are closed, healers are few or overtaxed, and anarchy rises as governments crumble.

What It Takes to Survive. Scared innocents, opportunistic scavengers, and leaderless institutions (military or otherwise) seek to survive. The hopeless acts of others might prove more horrifying than the disaster.

Ivan Shavrin

Occult detective stories straddle the line between fantasy, mystery, and horror. For the occult detective, solving paranormal mysteries is part of the job. In these adventures, supernatural criminals or monsters pursue nefarious ends while the characters act as detectives: interpreting events, seeking patterns, deducing goals, and ultimately putting an end to the threat. Investigation and cleverness take center stage in these adventures, although—as in the noir stories that inspire the genre—there's plenty of room for action.

Occult Detective Story Features

Consider the following principles when creating adventures with occult detective themes:

Lighter Frights. Occult detective adventures can be just as terrifying as other horror adventures but might be lighter in tone. Adventurers might encounter the results of horrific deeds rather than experiencing them firsthand and might face a foe only once they're prepared.

Supernatural Twists. Consider how monsters, magic, or other supernatural forces might lend a thrilling twist to criminal enterprises. How will the characters catch an invisible assassin or a thief who pilfers extradimensional spaces?

Threading Hints. Once you know the villain's mode of operation, consider how the villain might give themself away. Even if you're not sure, listen to the characters' plans and give them opportunities to feel brilliant in the course of their investigations.

Psychological Horror

Ivan Shavrin

Psychological horror stories create suspense by heightening or calling into question characters' states of mind, emotions, and perceptions. These tales often highlight the difference between what characters think and how they behave.

Psychological Horror Features

Consider the following principles when creating adventures with psychological horror themes:

Fears as Metaphors. Common anxieties and fears can become metaphors for antagonists in psychological horror. Fear of judgment by one's peers might manifest as a jury of nothics, while fear of change could be represented by a medusa that petrifies those who threaten the status quo.

Mental Illness Isn't Horror. Some classic psychological horror tales stigmatize mental illness. Avoid this trope in your adventures.

Unreliable Information. Uncertainty and paranoia shape psychological horror stories. Characters might experience a deadly encounter only to wake up at the end, not having realized they were asleep. Before undermining characters' senses, identify what's driving these skewed perceptions and how characters might overcome them.

Ivan Shavrin

Slasher horror contends with relentless killers, which might be people or monsters. These adventures revel in grisly details, the suspense of an impending showdown with a powerful foe, and the fear that death waits right around the corner.

Slasher Horror Features

Consider the following principles when creating adventures with slasher horror themes:

Solo Antagonist. Slasher horror stories typically include one major antagonist that threatens a group. This might be a particularly large or cunning beast, a murderer who terrorizes a neighborhood, a monster stalking a town, or a supernatural menace that spreads a signature cause of death.

Targets. Consider who the villain's targets are and why the villain is preying on that group. Is it out of hunger or for revenge, or does the creature have a deep-seated need to kill?

Violence and Infamy. Antagonists in slasher horror are often infamous, akin to urban legends, with numerous victims. Consider how the killer avoids capture and what makes the killer's actions warrant their infamy.

Chapter 5: Denizens of the Mists

A grim dullahan strikes down its victim, claiming another grisly death's head as a follower

Sean A. Murray

Terrors haunt the Mists. This chapter begins with advice to help you, the DM, use monsters to create frightful encounters. Following this is a collection of horrifying monsters and stalwart monster hunters for your adventures in the Domains of Dread.

Horror Monsters

Cultivating mystery and menace around the monstrous foes in your adventures can be a simple matter. Here are techniques you can use to transform any monster into a horror to haunt characters' nightmares.

Monstrous Origins

Unique monsters are singularly terrifying. Consider presenting the monster central to your adventures as a one-of-a-kind terror. Such a creature might be a fluke of nature, the product of insidious magic, a purposefully terrifying creation of the Dark Powers, or a being with an even more unsettling background. Use the tips for creating Darklords and drawing inspiration from different genres of horror in chapter 4 to create unique origins for the most important threats in your adventures.

Different origin stories suggest diverse paths for adventurers to follow when investigating these creatures, learning their weaknesses, and ensuring nothing like them ever menaces again.

Terrifying Language

Describe monsters in vivid ways. A terror chasing characters could just "follow" them, but instead it might "wriggle," "surge," or "galumph" after them. Descriptive language underscores how a creature behaves and conjures a visceral description of the monster. Unexpected descriptions can emphasize a creature's bizarre nature and unsettle the players. For example, it's one thing to say a snake "slithers," but another to say a sinister shadow or cruel witch does.

Use unsettling descriptions and similes. For example, a vine blight's constricting vines might resemble "noose-like cords" or "oily digits." Try less literal descriptions—even nonsensical ones. For example, a flesh golem might howl like "an earthquake in a mortuary" or "a charnel pit that's learned to sob."

Notorious Monsters

Treat creatures central to your horror adventures as infamous threats. The more you foreshadow their menace or reveal that they have threatened others before, the larger such creatures loom. Build dread by giving monsters reputations that suggest the monsters' form, deeds, or peculiarities while letting players' imaginations embellish details.

For example, tales might describe a skeletal horror that whistles cheerfully while committing brutal acts. Characters might hear rumors of the Whistling Fiend's melodies becoming haunting earworms for survivors of the fiend's attacks. A party seeking the monster might hear it whistling in the Mists long before they confront it. All that time, characters can speculate about their enemy's nature, but ultimately the Whistling Fiend might be any threat you choose.

Mysterious Monsters

Use conflicting descriptions and strange behaviors to cultivate mystery around your monster. The less characters know about a creature, the more they'll speculate about terrifying possibilities.

You can develop uncertainty about a creature even after it appears. Keep players guessing about an adventure's threat by referring to a monster by a flavorful description rather than the name of its stat block. A "zombie" doesn't sound like much of a threat, but a "stumbling mass of fetid skin and shattered bones" might be something else entirely.

Weird Traits

By adding unexpected traits to monster stat blocks, you can undermine players' expectations of what a monster is and what it can do. Consider how you can use the Creature Traits list in the "Creating a Creature" section of the Dungeon Master's Guide to give familiar monsters horrifying twists.

Putting It All Together

Combine the techniques in this section to create a unique terror. If you have ideas about what you want your monster to do, write them down. Then develop stories that connect those pieces or reinforce the type of horror you want to create.

A zombie beholder's terror is transformed when the monster is recast as a flesh-stitched horror

Helge C. Balzer

For example, perhaps you've got an idea for an arrogant mage who sought to prove he didn't need his adventuring companions' protection by constructing a suit of living armor. Considering the bizarre, magical whims of such a character, you choose a Zombie Beholder as the foundation for the mage's animate armor. To reinforce its nature as a magical creation, you change the monster's creature type from Undead to Construct and describe it as being made of stitched-together animal parts. Then you give it the Berserk and Magic Resistance traits of a Flesh Golem. The characters' surprise at unexpectedly facing a beholder might be startling enough, but you add to your story that the mage has become trapped within his living armor as it hunts his former companions. Only by defeating the horror might the characters free what remains of the mage within, represented by the Emissary of Juiblex creature trait from the "Creating a Creature" section of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Bestiary

The following pages detail monstrous and heroic inhabitants of the Domains of Dread, presented in alphabetical order. The Monsters by Challenge Rating table organizes these stat blocks by Challenge Rating.

Monsters by Challenge Rating

CR	Monster
1/2	Bodytaker Podling
1/2	Death's Head
1	Boneless
1	Carrionette
1	Aberrant Death's Head

CR	Monster
1	Petrifying Death's Head
1	Swarm of Zombie Limbs
2	Gremishka
2	Swarm of Infesting Insects
2	Wereraven
3	Brain in a Jar
3	Carrion Stalker
3	Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove
3	Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove
3	Mist Horror
3	Mist Wanderer
3	Swarm of Ravenous Insects
3	Waxwork
4	Death's Head Tree
4	Strahd Skeleton
4	Strigoi
4	Zombie Plague Spreader
5	Rudolph van Richten
5	Vampire Mind Flayer
6	Gallows Speaker
6	Priest of Osybus
6	Zombie Clot
7	Bodytaker Plant
7	Necrichor
8	Ez d'Avenir
8	Inquisitor of the Mind Fire
8	Inquisitor of the Sword
8	Inquisitor of the Tome
8	Nightgaunt
8	Relentless Slasher
8	Unspeakable Horror
8	Vampire Nosferatu
9	Jiangshi
9	Mi-Go
10	Dullahan
10	Madam Eva
11	Relentless Nightmare
11	Shoggoth
12	Gug
12	Mordenheim's Monster
12	Relentless Juggernaut
13	Loup Garou
14	Elder Thing
15	Yithian
19	Lesser Star Spawn Emissary
21	Greater Star Spawn Emissary

Rowan Holloway

Rowan Holloway

Bodytaker Plants

[+]

Body-Snatching Alien Flora

Bodytaker plants are intelligent organisms that originated on a long-ruined planet of the Material Plane. To outlive their doomed world, these enigmatic plants spread their seeds to the stars. In rare cases, their meteorite-like seeds fall to fertile worlds and take root. What emerges is a new bodytaker plant that seeks to grow and propagate until its kind dominates the entire world. As assistants, the plant creates eerie vegetative duplicates of the world's inhabitants called bodytaker podlings. Podlings serve the bodytaker plants' will, infiltrating societies and replacing the individuals they resemble. Ultimately, podlings seek to isolate inhabitants so they can become fertilizer for the bodytaker plant that created them or fodder for more podlings.

A new bodytaker podling emerges from a bodytaker plant

Antonio José Manzanedo

Bodytaker Podling

RHW p236

Small or Medium Plant, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+0 (10)	26 (4d8 + 8)	30 ft.	1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	16	+3	+3	**Dex**	11	+0	+0	**Con**	14	+2	+2
Int	10	+0	+0	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Skills Deception +4

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Deep Speech plus one other language

Traits

Semblance of Life. The podling is a physical copy of a creature digested by a Bodytaker Plant. The podling has Advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks made to pass as the digested creature. The podling melts into a slurry when it dies.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage.

Bodytaker Plant

RHW p237

Huge Plant, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	-1 (9)	138 (12d12 + 60)	10 ft., Climb 10 ft., Swim 10 ft.	7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	8	-1	-1	**Con**	20	+5	+5
Int	14	+2	+2	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	18	+4	+4

Vuln. Poison

Imm. Blinded, Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses Blindsight 120 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Podling Link. The plant can see through and communicate telepathically with any of its podlings within 10 miles of it. When the plant dies, its podlings also die.

Rejuvenation. If the plant dies, it revives with all its Hit Points in 1d10 days. This trait doesn't function if the plant is reduced to 0 Hit Points by Poison damage or its remains are sprinkled with salt.

Actions

Multiattack. The plant makes three Vine attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Entrapping Pod.

Vine. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 20 ft. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) Slashing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of four vines.

Entrapping Pod. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, one Large or smaller creature the plant is grappling. *Failure:* The target is pulled into the plant's space, is no longer Grappled, and is trapped in the plant's pod. While trapped, the target has the Blinded and Paralyzed conditions, and it has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the pod. After 2d4 hours, the trapped target dies, and if it was a Humanoid, a Bodytaker Podling resembling it emerges from the pod.

A creature outside the pod and within 5 feet of the plant can take an action to make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a successful check, the target is removed from the pod, falls in a space within 5 feet of the plant, and has the Prone condition. If the plant dies, the trapped target is no longer Blinded or Paralyzed and can escape from the pod using 5 feet of movement, exiting Prone.

Reactions

Transfer Harm. *Trigger:* An attack roll hits the plant while a podling is within 5 feet of the plant. *Response:* The plant halves the damage

Boneless

[+]

Flayed Flesh with Murderous Intent

Boneless are the animate skins of crushed or flensed humanoids. They rise from the corpses of those who suffered brutal ends such as flaying, crushing, or cannibalism. These hateful skins might seek vengeance, constricting and smothering victims using their elastic bodies. Alternatively, necromancers might create boneless to serve as stealthy assassins.

Vile magic-users might order a boneless to hang like a grotesque banner or adorn a skeleton or zombie. When foes approach, the boneless peels away from its surroundings or undead ally to face them.

Valera Lutfullina

Boneless

RHW p238

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+2 (12)	22 (4d8 + 4)	30 ft.	1 (XP 200; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	15	+2	+2	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	1	-5	-5	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	1	-5	-5

Skills Stealth +4

Res. Bludgeoning

Imm. Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Traits

Abduct. The boneless needn't spend extra movement to move a creature it is grappling.

Compression. The boneless can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

Actions

Smother. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 12). Until the grapple ends, the target has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, is suffocating, and takes 7 (2d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the boneless's turns. The boneless can smother only one creature at a time. While grappling a target, the boneless can't take this action again.

Bonus Actions

Unraveling Flesh (1/Day). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 11, each creature within 30 feet that can see the boneless. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition. *Failure or Success:* The boneless moves up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Brain in a Jar

[+]

Disembodied, Manipulative Mastermind

A brain in a jar is the gray matter of one who cheated death through magic or strange surgeries. It now forces its will on those around it.

Some brains in jars are the result of strange experiments, bizarre punishments, or the aberrant preservation methods of creatures and mi-go.

A brain in a jar's container might be an alien contraption, ostentatious glassware, or a mundane canister.

Andrey Kuzinskiy

Brain in a Jar

RHW p239

Small Undead, Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
11	-4 (6)	55 (10d6 + 20)	5 ft., Fly 20 ft. (hover)	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	1	-5	-5	**Dex**	3	-4	-4	**Con**	15	+2	+2
Int	19	+4	+6	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	15	+2	+4

Imm. Exhaustion, Paralyzed

Senses Blindsight 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Telepathy 60 ft. understands Common plus three other languages but can't speak; telepathy 60 ft.

Traits

Detect Intelligence. The brain magically senses the location of any creature within 300 feet of itself that has an Intelligence score of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers.

Magic Resistance. The brain has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The brain makes two Disrupting Burst attacks.

Disrupting Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Psychic damage. The target can't take Reactions until the end of its next turn, and it has Disadvantage on saving throws to maintain Concentration until the end of its next turn.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Incapacitated condition until the end of the brain's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Spellcasting. The brain casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: Charm Person, Detect Thoughts, Mage Hand

1/day each: Compulsion, Hold Person (level 3 version)

Carrion Stalker

[+]

Gut-Bursting Corpse Eater

Carrion stalkers are parasites that feed on corpses, infesting bodies with their maggot-like young. While stalkers can survive off corpses, they're attracted to movement and ambush any who disturb them. The foul parasites attach to their prey, using their stingers to implant their larvae into living victims. If a carrion stalker doesn't slay and consume its foe, its larvae grow rapidly within that creature. After a day of gestation, a larva bursts from its host as a mature carrion stalker in an eruption as horrifying as it is lethal.

Carrion stalkers have symbiotic relationships with carrion crawlers. Carrion crawlers won't devour bodies infested by carrion stalkers, but they might pick up stalker larvae as they root among filth. The crawlers then spread these young, infecting sewers or graveyards with carrion stalkers. In return, carrion stalkers avoid preying on carrion crawlers.

Battlefields, mass graves, and similar sites make natural homes for carrion stalkers. While corpses left by plagues or wars might coax carrion stalkers into streets or alleys, these vile parasites rarely creep onto the surface unless they become an overwhelming infestation.

Leroy Steinmann

Carrion Stalker

RHW p240

Tiny Aberration, Unaligned

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+3 (13)	55 (10d4 + 30)	30 ft., Burrow 30 ft.	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	6	-2	-2	**Dex**	17	+3	+3	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	2	-4	-4	**Wis**	13	+1	+1	**Cha**	6	-2	-2

Senses Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages —

Actions

Multiattack. The carrion stalker makes two Tentacle attacks and one Stinger attack.

Tentacle. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) Piercing damage, and the carrion stalker attaches to the target. While attached, the carrion stalker can't make Tentacle attacks against other targets.

The carrion stalker can detach itself by spending 5 feet of movement. The target or a creature within 5 feet of it can detach the carrion stalker as an action.

Stinger. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5 (with Advantage if the carrion stalker is attached to the target), reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) Poison damage, and the target is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition. While Poisoned in this way, the target is infested with a carrion stalker larva. If the target is still Poisoned in this way after 24 hours, the effect ends as the larva becomes a fully grown Carrion Stalker, which bursts from the target's chest and kills it.

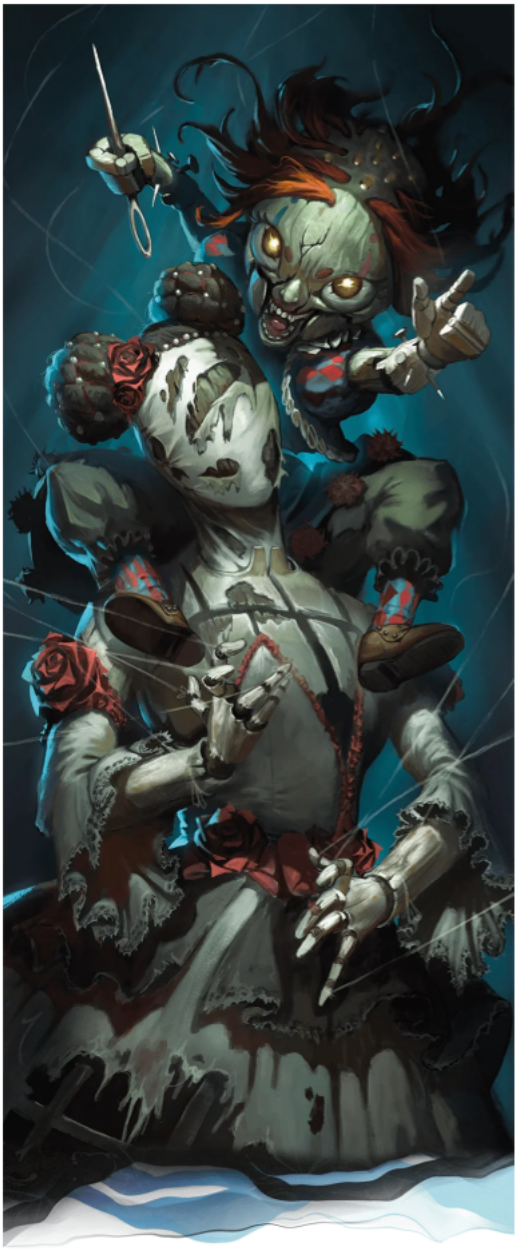
Carrionette

[+]

Evil Toy Come to Life

When evil energies infest a children's toy box, once-beloved playthings can become cursed monsters. Such is the case of the carrionette, an animated doll or puppet that uses its sinister magic to swap bodies with a living person.

Carrionettes can hide in plain sight amid a jumbled toy chest or crate of disused trinkets. A carrionette might wait patiently for years to be picked up by an unsuspecting victim—preferably an adventurer, a trader, or someone else with autonomy and a sturdy body—only to crawl out of the looter's backpack in the middle of the night for a harrowing sneak attack.



Guilherme Motta

Carrionette

RHW p241

Tiny Construct, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+4 (14)	17 (5d4 + 5)	25 ft.	1 (XP 200; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	15	+2	+2	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	8	-1	-1	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	14	+2	+2

Skills Stealth +6

Res. Poison, Psychic

Imm. Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Common plus one other language

Actions

Silver Needle. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 1 Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Humanoid not cursed by a carrionette, it is subjected to the following effect. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 11. *Failure:* The target is cursed for 1 minute. Until the curse ends, the target has the Poisoned condition, and its Speed is reduced by 10 feet.

Soul Swap (Recharge 5–6). *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 11, one Humanoid the carrionette can see within 15 feet that is cursed by its Silver Needle. *Failure:* The carrionette possesses the target's body, and the target possesses the carrionette's body and has the Unconscious condition for 1 hour. While possessing another body, the carrionette and target retain their alignments; personalities; Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores; and languages known. They otherwise adopt the other creature's game statistics, though the target can't use this Soul Swap action.

The possession is undone if the target (while in the carrionette's body) deals damage to the carrionette (in the target's original body) with its Silver Needle. If either body is destroyed, both the carrionette and the target die.

Death's Heads

[+]

Flying Undead Heads

Death's heads are disembodied, flying heads reanimated by wicked magic. These hateful heads vary in description and state of decay, with some possessing supernatural powers related to the beings they once were. Roll twice on or choose results from the Death's Head Features table to inspire the features of a death's head.

1d10	The Head Is That of...	With...
1	A bear	Bloodshot eyes
2	A burned corpse	Crimson drool
3	A hag	Extra eyes
4	A Humanoid	Face paint
5	A medusa	An iron mask
6	A mind flayer	A lengthy tongue
7	A nothic	Long hair
8	A shark	Sharpened teeth
9	A wolf	Wooden teeth
10	An elk	Exposed bone

Three types of death's heads guard an accursed death's head tree

Chris Seaman

Death's Head

RHW p242

Tiny Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+1 (11)	17 (5d4 + 5)	5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)	1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	5	-3	-3	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	3	-4	-4

Res. Necrotic

Imm. Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages —

Traits

Flyby. The death's head doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage.

Aberrant Death's Head

RHW p243

Tiny Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+1 (11)	24 (7d4 + 7)	5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)	1 (XP 200; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	8	-1	+1	**Wis**	14	+2	+4	**Cha**	3	-4	-4

Res. Necrotic, Psychic

Imm. Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages —

Traits

Flyby. The death's head doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Brain-Rending Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the death's head's next turn.

Petrifying Death's Head

RHW p243

Tiny Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+1 (11)	21 (6d4 + 6)	5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)	1 (XP 200; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	12	+1	+1	**Con**	13	+1	+3
Int	5	-3	-3	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	3	-4	-4

Res. Necrotic

Imm. Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages —

Traits

Flyby. The death's head doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Petrifying Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 11. *First Failure:* The target has the Restrained condition and repeats the save at the end of its next turn if it is still Restrained, ending the effect on itself on a success. *Second Failure:* The target has the Petrified condition instead of the Restrained condition for 10 minutes, after which the effect ends on the target.

Death's Head Tree

RHW p243

Huge Plant, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	-1 (9)	95 (10d12 + 30)	20 ft.	4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+6	**Dex**	8	-1	-1	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	5	-3	-3	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	13	+1	+1

Imm. Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Blindsight 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages —

Traits

Overhanging Branches. The tree's allies can willingly end their moves in the tree's space. Allies in the tree's space have Half Cover.

Unholy Regrowth. If the tree dies, 2d6 Death's Head Trees regrow around the same place in 365 days unless the tree is killed by a creature under the effect of a Bless spell using a weapon that deals Slashing damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The tree makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

Exploding Head. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 10-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the tree can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage, and the creature has the Poisoned condition until the start of the tree's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Head Fruits. Each Undead ally in the tree's space can immediately take a Reaction to gain 5 Temporary Hit Points.

[+]

Vengeful Headless Hunter

Headless, undying warriors, dullahans arise from decapitated villains and murderously seek to recover their missing heads. In their endless hunts, they terrorize sites relevant to their crimes or near where they died, beheading anyone they believe responsible (or connected to those responsible) for their deaths. Aside from their lethal blades, dullahans terrorize foes with their terrifying wails and by throwing the flame-wreathed skulls of past victims. Many pursue their victims astride undead or fiendish steeds.

Dullahan

[+]

Dullahan

RHW p244

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+2 (12)	127 (17d8 + 51)	30 ft.	10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	Dex	14	+2	+2	Con	16	+3	+7
Int	11	+0	+0	Wis	15	+2	+2	Cha	16	+3	+3

Skills Perception +6

Res. Cold, Necrotic, Poison

Imm. Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Understands Common plus one other language but can't speak

Traits

Mounted Adept. While mounted and without the Incapacitated condition, the dullahan and its mount have Advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and the dullahan can force an attack targeted at its mount to target the dullahan instead.

Terrorizer. The dullahan has Advantage on attack rolls against targets that have the Frightened condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The dullahan makes two attacks, using Beheading Blade or Fiery Skull in any combination, and uses Headless Wail.

Beheading Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage. If the target is reduced to 0 Hit Points by this attack, it dies and its head is lopped off. The head rises as a Death's Head in the space of the target's corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The head is under the dullahan's control. The dullahan can control no more than seven heads at a time.

Fiery Skull. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 120 ft. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) Fire damage.

Headless Wail. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, up to three creatures within 120 feet of the dullahan that aren't Constructs or Undead. *Failure:* 13 (2d12) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the dullahan's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Elder Thing

ELDER THING (INFO) [+]

Mathias Kollros

[+]

Elder Thing

RHW p245

Large Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+0 (10)	209 (22d10 + 88)	20 ft., Fly 90 ft. (hover)	14 (XP 11,500; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	21	+5	+5	**Dex**	11	+0	+0	**Con**	18	+4	+9
Int	20	+5	+10	**Wis**	17	+3	+3	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Psychic, Slashing

Imm. Lightning; Charmed, Frightened

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Magic Resistance. The elder thing has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The elder thing makes two Soothing Tentacle attacks and uses Psychic Skewer.

Soothing Tentacle. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Psychic damage, and the target has the Charmed condition until the start of the elder thing's next turn.

Mind-Scouring Spores (Recharge 6). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the elder thing. *Failure:* 55 (10d10) Psychic damage. For 1 minute, whenever the target takes the Magic action, it takes 10 (3d6) Psychic damage. *Success:* Half damage only.

Psychic Skewer. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature within 60 feet. *Failure:* 22 (4d10) Psychic damage. If the target has the Charmed condition, it gains 1 Exhaustion level and has the Stunned condition while Charmed.

Bonus Actions

Eldritch Magic (3/Day). The elder thing casts Command, Detect Thoughts, Gust of Wind, or Nondetection, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18).

Ez d'Avenir

[–]

Loading "Ez d'Avenir (Info)"...

Taras Susak

Ez d'Avenir

[+]

Wandering Monster Hunter

Ez d'Avenir first encountered monsters among her manipulative family, the Radanaviches, who posed as Vistani to prey on travelers. Among their foul deeds, the Radanavich family kidnapped Erasmus van Richten, the son of Rudolph van Richten and sold him to his death at the hands of the vampire Baron Metus. In the brief time Ez knew Erasmus, the youth spoke lovingly of a different sort of family than the one Ez knew. When Erasmus's father tracked down Ez's family and delivered her mother to justice, Ez didn't stop the determined doctor.

In the years that followed, Ez joined a true Vistani band and adopted the name d'Avenir. She traveled far but never found the sense of belonging Erasmus described. She sought out Rudolph van Richten and, after a wary introduction, came to study with the doctor. During that time, she reconnected with Erasmus, now a ghost. She learned priceless lessons from the van Richtens, but she eventually left their household to pursue her own destiny.

Ez's skillful slaying of monsters and her bravery in the face of supernatural perils have earned her a reputation as a folk hero and Mist wanderer of note. Although her adventures have cost her dearly—she has lost valuable bounties, dear companions, and her leg from the knee down—Ez works tirelessly to eradicate evil and protect innocents. Armed with wisdom from her mentor, encouragement from her departed friend, and hope forged in the depths of her heart, Ez aspires to someday create a place that feels safe enough to call home.

Whether she's hunting monsters or investigating mysteries, Ez carries Vistani music with her wherever she goes. She boasts a significant repertoire of songs from across the Land of the Mists, which she's happy to perform for anyone who travels alongside her.

Taras Susak

Ez d'Avenir

RHW p246

Medium Humanoid (Human), Chaotic Good

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+7 (17)	120 (16d8 + 48)	30 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	14	+2	+2	Dex	19	+4	+7	Con	16	+3	+3
Int	18	+4	+4	Wis	11	+0	+3	Cha	17	+3	+3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +6, Perception +3, Stealth +7, Survival +3

Gear Light Crossbow, Rapier

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish

Actions

Multiattack. Ez makes three attacks, using Hunter's Blade or Fiery Bolt in any combination.

Hunter's Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) Radiant damage.

Fiery Bolt. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 120 ft. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) Fire damage.

Spellcasting. Ez casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

At will: Light, Mage Hand

1/day each: Dispel Evil and Good, Lightning Bolt, Magic Circle

Bonus Actions

Bolster Allies. Ez chooses up to six allies within 60 feet. Each target that can hear her has Ez's choice of (A) Advantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn or (B) Resistance to Acid, Necrotic, and Poison damage until the end of its next turn.

Curse of the All-Seeing Eye (1/Day). Ez chooses a damage type. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, one target within 30 feet that Ez can see. *Failure:* The target is cursed. Until the curse ends, the target has Vulnerability to the chosen damage type. The curse ends early if Ez uses this action again.

If the target drops to 0 Hit Points before the curse ends, Ez can take a Bonus Action on a later turn to curse a new creature.

Inspiring Rally. Ez chooses up to six allies within 60 feet. Each target that can hear her can take a Reaction to move up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Reactions

[+]

Mass-Grave Ghost

Gallows speakers are swirling maelstroms of restless spirits. They rise from sites of mass tragedies or pointless yet bloody battles. Gallows speakers rage endlessly with the weapons and death screams of the souls that compose its being, compelling those who come near to join in its suffering and uncontrollable violence.

Gallows Speaker

Gallows Speaker

RHW p248

Huge Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+3 (13)	75 (10d12 + 10)	5 ft., Fly 40 ft. (hover)	6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	9	-1	-1	**Dex**	16	+3	+3	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	10	+0	+0	**Wis**	12	+1	+1	**Cha**	19	+4	+4

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder

Imm. Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses Truesight 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common plus two other languages

Traits

Aura of Violence. At the end of each of the gallows speaker's turns, each creature of the gallows speaker's choice in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the gallows speaker suffers the following effect. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15. *Failure:* The target takes a Reaction to make a melee attack roll against a creature within reach. If no creature is within reach, the target takes 7 (2d6) Psychic damage.

Whirling Form. The gallows speaker can enter a creature's space and stop there.

Actions

Multiattack. The gallows speaker makes two Whirling Blades attacks.

Whirling Blades. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) Slashing damage plus 7 (3d4) Necrotic damage.

Howling Wind (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Thunder damage, and the target has the Frightened condition for 1 minute. While Frightened in this way, the creature has the Deafened condition, is compelled to shriek along with the gallows speaker, and can't cast spells with a Verbal component. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. *Success:* Half damage only.

Gremishka

[+]

Magic-Reactive Mage Killer

Gremishkas are magically unstable creations of misguided magic-users. These wildly destructive menaces delight in tormenting spellcasters and seek to destroy anything associated with them, particularly spellbooks, spell components, and familiars. If exposed to magic, a lone gremishka explodes into a destructive swarm of duplicate gremishkas.

Olivier Bernard

[+]

Gremishka

RHW p249

Tiny Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+2 (12)	31 (7d4 + 14)	30 ft.	2 (XP 450; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	12	+1	+1	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	15	+2	+2
Int	11	+0	+0	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	4	-3	-3

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Traits

Magic Resistance. The gremishka has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Bite (Individual Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Force damage.

Reactions

Magic Allergy (Individual Form Only; 1/Day). *Trigger:* A creature within 30 feet of the gremishka casts a spell. *Response:* The gremishka regains 15 Hit Points, then becomes a Medium swarm of Tiny creatures.

Gug

[+]

Cavern-Stalking, Aberrant Glutton

Gugs are gigantic, subterranean horrors with heads split by toothy, vertical maws. They are stealthy predators that favor humanoid prey. Gugs fear and hate ghouls, perhaps because they compete to dominate the hidden necropolises and charnel depths of the Underdark, or for reasons related to a curse that forces gugs to dwell underground.

Audy Ravindra

Gug

RHW p250

Huge Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+6 (16)	250 (20d12 + 120)	40 ft.	12 (XP 8,400; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+10	**Dex**	15	+2	+2	**Con**	23	+6	+10
Int	7	-2	-2	**Wis**	16	+3	+3	**Cha**	11	+0	+0

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +10

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 17

Languages Understands Deep Speech but can't speak

Traits

Pack Tactics. The gug has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the gug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally doesn't have the Incapacitated condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The gug makes two Claw attacks and uses Chew.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of two claws.

Chew. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, up to two Medium or smaller creatures Grappled by the gug. *Failure:* The gug places the target in its mouth and chews. A chewed creature is no longer Grappled but has the Restrained condition. While Restrained in this way, a target has Half Cover against attacks and other effects not originating from the gug and takes 10 (3d6) Piercing damage at the start of each of the gug's turns. A gug can have a maximum of four creatures in its mouth at a time.

A creature in the gug's mouth can take an action to make a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. On a successful check, the target is no longer Restrained and moves to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the gug. If the gug dies, a target is no longer Restrained and can escape from the gug using 5 feet of movement, exiting with the Prone condition.

[+]

Vindictive, Vitality-Sapping Corpse

When a soul becomes trapped within its corpse, its bitterness can reanimate its body, creating a jiangshi. These vengeful dead stalk their descendants, sowing terror and taking retribution for the slights or neglected burial rites that led to their cursed resurrections. Rigor mortis notoriously afflicts the limbs of jiangshi, causing them to hold their arms rigidly and to walk with a stiff gait. This, along with their flight, leads many to call them hopping vampires.

By day, jiangshi lurk within tombs or hidden ruins to avoid attention from the living. At night, they emerge to drain the life from those who dare wander in darkness. A Humanoid killed by a jiangshi rises as a life-hungry corpse that, if given the chance to slake its thirst, might also turn into jiangshi.

Irina Nordsol

Jiangshi

RHW p251

Medium Undead, Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	-4 (6)	119 (14d8 + 56)	20 ft., Fly 5 ft. (hover)	9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	3	-4	-4	**Con**	18	+4	+8
Int	17	+3	+7	**Wis**	14	+2	+6	**Cha**	12	+1	+5

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common plus three other languages

Traits

Jiangshi Weaknesses. The jiangshi has these weaknesses:

Fear of Its Own Reflection. If the jiangshi sees its reflection, it immediately takes its Reaction, if available, to move as far from the reflection as possible.

Susceptible to Holy Symbols. While the jiangshi is wearing or touching a Holy Symbol, it loses its Immunity to the Frightened condition and automatically fails saving throws to avoid or end the Frightened condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The jiangshi makes three Slam attacks and uses Consume Energy.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

Consume Energy. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the jiangshi can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The jiangshi regains Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage taken, the jiangshi's Fly Speed increases to 20 feet until the end of its next turn, and it can take its Hungering Stride Bonus Action. A Humanoid reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage rises at the end of the jiangshi's turn as a Wight under the jiangshi's control. If this wight kills a Humanoid with its Life Drain action, the wight transforms into an independent Jiangshi 5 days later.

Bonus Actions

Hungering Stride (Requires Consume Energy). The jiangshi takes the Dash action.

Shape-Shift. The jiangshi shape-shifts into a Medium or Small Beast, Humanoid, or Undead creature, or it returns to its true form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Loup Garou

[+]

Legendary Lycanthrope

Loup garou are powerful lycanthropes capable of transforming into hulking dire wolves. They actively seek to spread the curse of lycanthropy, creating packs of subservient werewolves that can reduce communities to ruins and ravage whole regions. The strain of lycanthropy spread by a loup garou is harder to cure than typical varieties. Only slaying a loup garou can free the monster's victims from their affliction.

Loup Garou

Loup Garou

RHW p252

Small or Medium Monstrosity (Lycanthrope), Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
17	+9 (19)	187 (22d8 + 88)	30 ft., 40 ft. (hybrid form only), 50 ft. (dire wolf form only)	13 (XP 10,000; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	24	+7	+7	**Dex**	18	+4	+9	**Con**	21	+5	+10
Int	14	+2	+2	**Wis**	16	+3	+3	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +9

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Gear Longsword

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common (can't speak in dire wolf form)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the loup garou fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The loup garou makes two attacks, using Longsword or Rend in any combination. It can replace one attack with a Bite attack.

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) Piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 18. *Failure:* The target is cursed. If the cursed target drops to 0 Hit Points, it instead becomes a Werewolf under the DM's control and has 10 Hit Points. The curse can't be removed until this loup garou dies. *Success:* The target is immune to this loup garou's curse for 24 hours.

Longsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) Slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage.

Rend (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. The loup garou shape-shifts into a Large dire wolf-humanoid hybrid or a Large dire wolf, or it returns to its true humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Madam Eva

[+]

Duplicitous Diviner

The mysterious fortune teller Madam Eva shrouds herself in a carefully woven web of lies. Though she appears to be in her seventies, she is much older. She sets herself apart from any group, guarding the secrets of her origins and centuries-spanning agendas.

Madam Eva is a legendary figure known across the Land of the Mists. Few can rival her skill at interpreting omens, reading tarokka cards, or taming spirits during séances. While the fortunes she shares might have double meanings, they're never wrong. She is renowned for revealing when best to enter the Mists to escape a domain or reach an intended destination, leading many travelers to seek her on the shores of the Tser Pool in Barovia to seek her insights. She often hints at knowledge of the Mists' secrets and the tales (and weaknesses) of Darklords, and she's not above revealing them for a price. Madam Eva holds grudges and usually shares her secrets only with those who do her a favor first. Whatever she discovers might soon also be known by Barovia's Darklord, with whom she shares age-old ties.

Peter Polach

Madam Eva

RHW p253

Medium Humanoid (Human), Chaotic Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+4 (14)	117 (18d8 + 36)	30 ft.	10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	11	+0	+0	**Con**	14	+2	+2
Int	17	+3	+3	**Wis**	20	+5	+9	**Cha**	18	+4	+8

Skills Arcana +7, Insight +9, Perception +9, Religion +7

Senses Passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

Traits

Magic Resistance. Madam Eva has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Madam Eva makes three attacks, using Cursed Dagger or Radiant Flame in any combination.

Cursed Dagger. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) Piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage.

Radiant Flame. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +9, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) Radiant damage, and the target has the Blinded condition until the start of Madam Eva's next turn.

Apocalyptic Visions (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point Madam Eva can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 24 (7d6) Necrotic damage plus 24 (7d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of Madam Eva's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Spellcasting. Madam Eva casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At will: Light, Mending, Thaumaturgy

2/day each: Dispel Magic, Remove Curse

1/day each: Greater Restoration, Raise Dead, Scrying, Spirit Guardians (level 8 version)

Bonus Actions

Evil Eye (2/Day). Madam Eva casts Hold Person, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Mi-Go

[+]

Brain-Robbing Alien Fungus

Bizarre beings that profanely unite features of alien insects and otherworldly fungus, mi-go bend their unfathomable intellects toward colonizing worlds and controlling the inhabitants. They work with bizarre precision, learning all they can about how other creatures think and define identity. To this end, mi-go extract creatures' brains for research and experimentation. Occasionally they swap brains between individuals, or they place stolen brains into the bodies of radically different creatures, then observe the results from afar.

Mi-go aren't impeded by light, but they prefer the dark. They typically lurk in secluded caverns and amid remote heights.

Diana Franco

Mi-Go

RHW p254

Medium Aberration, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+6 (16)	120 (16d8 + 48)	30 ft., Fly 30 ft.	9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	20	+5	+5	**Dex**	15	+2	+6	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	21	+5	+9	**Wis**	15	+2	+6	**Cha**	12	+1	+1

Skills Arcana +9, Perception +6, Stealth +6

Res. Acid, Lightning

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Magic Resistance. The mi-go has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Silver Canister. The mi-go has a silver canister. While holding or carrying the canister, the mi-go can use its Extract Brain action.

The canister has AC 15, HP 40, and Resistance to all damage. The canister breaks if reduced to 0 Hit Points. If the canister is broken, any brains inside it are destroyed. The mi-go can create a new canister after 7 days.

Actions

Multiattack. The mi-go makes two Pincer attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Dazing Ray if available.

Pincer. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) Slashing damage plus 16 (3d10) Acid damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15) from one of two pincers.

Dazing Ray (Recharge 4–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature the mi-go can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 22 (4d10) Lightning damage plus 10 (3d6) Force damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of the mi-go's next turn.

Extract Brain (Requires Silver Canister). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature that is Grappled by the mi-go or that has the Stunned condition. *Failure:* 77 (14d10) Piercing damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* If this damage reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, the mi-go kills it, removes its brain, and places the brain in its silver canister.

Spellcasting. The mi-go casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

1/day each: Modify Memory, Plane Shift (self only)

Mist Horror

[+]

Shapeless Stalker in the Mists

The Mists separating the Domains of Dread are far from safe—or empty. Mist horrors are animate clouds of vapor, barely perceptible within the Mists. In the presence of creatures, these vaporous terrors take the shape of their viewers' greatest fears. Such appearances are subjective, and anyone who views a mist horror sees it in the way that terrifies them most. A mist horror outside the Mists swiftly loses cohesion and collapses into harmless vapor.

Irina Nordsol

Mist Horror

RHW p255

Large Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+2 (12)	45 (7d10 + 7)	25 ft., Fly 25 ft. (hover)	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	1	-5	-5	**Dex**	15	+2	+2	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	6	-2	-2	**Wis**	13	+1	+1	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Blindsight 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages —

Traits

Air Form. The mist horror can enter an enemy's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

One with the Mists. While the mist horror is in fog or mist, it has the Invisible condition. The mist horror has the Incapacitated condition while it is outside an area of fog or mist.

Actions

Multiattack. The mist horror makes two Mind Rend attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting to cast Command if available.

Mind Rend. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) Psychic damage.

Spellcasting. The mist horror casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: Fog Cloud

1/day: Command

Bonus Actions

Instill Dread (Recharge 4–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in the mist horror's space. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition until the start of the mist horror's next turn.

[+]

Traveler Between Domains

Those who travel between the Domains of Dread develop traditions that hasten their travel and protect them from evil. Vistani, along with those who research their ways or the secrets of the Mists, are the most adept of such domain explorers.

Polar Engine

Mist Wanderer

RHW p256

Small or Medium Humanoid, Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+2 (12)	52 (8d8 + 16)	30 ft.	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	14	+2	+2
Int	12	+1	+1	**Wis**	16	+3	+3	**Cha**	13	+1	+1

Skills Arcana +3, Insight +5, Medicine +5

Gear Orb, Leather Armor

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Common plus one other language

Traits

Death Curse. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the wanderer when it dies. *Failure:* The target is cursed. While cursed, the target has the Blinded and Deafened conditions.

Mist Walker. The wanderer can travel safely through the Mists to reach a specific domain it knows by name. The wanderer still can't bypass domain borders closed by a Darklord's will.

Actions

Multiattack. The wanderer makes two Radiant Burst attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting to cast Mind Spike if available.

Radiant Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) Radiant damage.

Spellcasting. The wanderer casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: Light, Mage Hand

1/day each: Augury, Detect Magic, Mind Spike

Bonus Actions

Evil Eye (1/Day). The wanderer casts Hold Person, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

[+]

Masterwork of Stolen Flesh

The creations of Dr. Viktra Mordenheim, Darklord of Lamordia, defy reason and classification as mere flesh golems. As she seeks to re-create her masterpiece, the Unbreakable Heart, Mordenheim has refined the creation of beings that are much more than the sum of their rotting parts. Known as Mordenheim's monsters, these collections of body parts are reanimated into striking, mighty, thinking beings with wills of their own. While some might be convinced to serve their creator, others seek to recover some semblance of the lives they remember in fractured memories. Still others believe that they are something new and greater than what they were before and seek to create a new life—whether on their own or at the expense of communities that shun and fear them.

Marie Magny

Mordenheim's Monster

RHW p257

Medium Construct, Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
18	+7 (17)	161 (19d8 + 76)	40 ft.	12 (XP 8,400; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+10	**Dex**	16	+3	+7	**Con**	19	+4	+4
Int	14	+2	+2	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	5	-3	-3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +14

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Lightning, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common plus one other language

Traits

Greater Lightning Absorption. Whenever the monster is subjected to Lightning damage, it regains a number of Hit Points equal to the Lightning damage dealt, and its Speed increases by 40 feet until the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form. The monster can't shape-shift.

Magic Resistance. The monster has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The monster makes two Slam attacks and uses Crush or Throw.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Lightning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 18) from one of two hands.

Crush. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature Grappled by the monster. *Failure:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Lightning damage, and the target has the Restrained condition. While Restrained, the target is suffocating.

Throw. The monster throws a creature Grappled by it to a space it can see within 30 feet of itself that isn't in the air. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, the creature thrown and each creature in the destination space. *Failure:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Violent Leap. The monster spends 10 feet of movement to jump to a space within 40 feet that contains one or more Medium or smaller creatures. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature in the monster's destination space. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Bludgeoning damage, and

Necrichor

[+]

Reanimated Blood of an Evil Entity

Necrichors are beings of sapient blood spawned from magical corruption, such as the gore of an obscene deity or a failed lich. They aspire to steal living bodies to fulfill megalomaniacal goals. Necrichors leave a trace of their essence within those they control, making necrichors difficult to destroy.

David Astruga

David Astruga

Necrichor

RHW p258

Medium Undead, Lawful Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+3 (13)	85 (10d8 + 40)	20 ft., Climb 20 ft.	7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	8	-1	-1	**Dex**	16	+3	+3	**Con**	18	+4	+7
Int	17	+3	+6	**Wis**	13	+1	+4	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Res. Acid, Necrotic

Imm. Poison; Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses Blindsight 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Telepathy 120 ft. Common plus two other languages

Traits

Amorphous. The necrichor can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the necrichor fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Reborn by Blood. If destroyed, the necrichor revives with all its Hit Points in 1d10 days in the nearest unoccupied space next to a creature of its choice that it has previously possessed with its Blood Puppeteering action. This trait doesn't function if the destroyed necrichor's remains are in a vessel affected by the Hallow spell or if all the necrichor's previous Blood Puppeteering targets are dead.

Spider Climb. The necrichor can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Multiattack. The necrichor makes two Necrotic Burst attacks.

Necrotic Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) Force damage plus 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of the necrichor's next turn. While Poisoned, the target can't regain Hit Points.

Blood Puppeteering (Recharge 6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, one Bloodied creature within 5 feet. Constructs and Undead automatically succeed on this save. *Failure:* The target is possessed by the necrichor; the necrichor disappears, and the target has the Incapacitated condition and loses control of its body. The necrichor now controls the target's body, but the target retains awareness. The necrichor can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect except ones that specifically target Undead. The necrichor's game statistics are the same, except it uses the possessed target's Speed and Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores.

The possession lasts until the target drops to 0 Hit Points or the necrichor leaves it as a Bonus Action. When the possession ends, the necrichor appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target, and the target is immune to this necrichor's Blood Puppeteering

Nightgaunt

[+]

Faceless Fearmonger from the Far Realm

Inscrutable, gargoyle-like fiends, nightgaunts soar over subterranean mountain ranges and the skies of alien worlds. These hunters are infamous for abducting victims and dropping them from incredible heights. Those who have escaped nightgaunts describe the touch of their razor-like claws as "tickling" in a way that causes every sense to scream.

A nightgaunt's head is a smooth, horned polyp. Before a nightgaunt kills, its head splits apart, revealing an otherworldly glow deep within.

Diana Franco

Nightgaunt

RHW p259

Large Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+8 (18)	136 (16d10 + 48)	30 ft., Fly 40 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	17	+3	+3	**Dex**	20	+5	+8	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	13	+1	+1	**Wis**	16	+3	+6	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Res. Lightning, Poison, Psychic

Imm. Blinded, Deafened, Exhaustion

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Understands Deep Speech but can't speak

Traits

Flyby. The nightgaunt doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The nightgaunt makes two attacks, using Claw or Barb in any combination. It can replace one attack with a use of Ascend.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) Poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13).

Barb. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) Piercing damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

Ascend. The nightgaunt flies upward in a straight line, moving up to its Fly Speed. If the nightgaunt is grappling a creature, it ignores the extra movement cost to carry the creature with it.

Bonus Actions

Tickle. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature Grappled by the nightgaunt. *Failure:* The target has the Incapacitated condition until the start of the nightgaunt's next turn.

Priest of Osybus

[+]

Necromancer Cursed by Dark Powers

The priests of Osybus are evil necromancers who steal souls to fuel their malevolent magic. Thanks to a foul bargain made with dread powers, these priests can defy death by transforming into undead.

Centuries ago, Osybus, a mysterious figure of immense ambition and evil, founded the order of priests that now bears his name. Osybus sought to use others' souls to achieve immortality. He forged pacts with any entity that promised him more power, and he delved into any eldritch secret that could possibly prolong his life. He became a devotee of the Dark Powers and tapped into their immortal malice to fuel his apotheosis. As his power grew, he shared his secrets with disciples who wished to defy death in exchange for their worship.

Osybus achieved his goal and became a lich of almost godly power. He rewarded his disciples with a trace of his power in the form of shadowy tattoos. Osybus's boon gave his priests the ability to steal souls and to cheat death by transforming into undead horrors.

The threat posed by Osybus and his disciples raised alarms far and wide. The Ulmist Inquisition—which at the time counted then-mortal Count Strahd von Zarovich as an ally—faced Osybus in battle. Fearing that their master eventually would consume their souls, Osybus's disciples aided the inquisition by destroying Osybus's physical form. As Osybus perished, he cursed his former allies: Their immortality would fail them eventually, and he would become one of the Dark Powers.

To rid themselves of this curse, Osybus's former devotees turned to the same Dark Powers with whom their master had communed. They received a mission: Provide a mighty noble to serve as an earthly vessel for the Dark Powers to enter the world and conquer it. They found a suitable vessel in Strahd von Zarovich. Working in shadows and through intermediaries, the priests whispered hatred to the count. Once the priests corrupted Strahd's heart, they laid the path before him that led to his fall into vampirism.

But Osybus hadn't lied; he became one of the Dark Powers. Those powers conjured a misty prison to contain the newly immortal Strahd, thereby stymieing the priests' ambitions to use the count as a weapon of conquest.

The priests of Osybus still seek to unleash Strahd from the Mists, often using adventurers as pawns. They continue to bear their hated

Polar Engine

A Soul Tattoo on the Flesh of a Priest of Osybus

Jane Katsubo

Priest of Osybus

RHW p261

Small or Medium Humanoid, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+2 (12)	60 (8d8 + 24)	20 ft., Climb 20 ft.	6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	18	+4	+7	**Wis**	17	+3	+6	**Cha**	11	+0	+3

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common plus two other languages

Traits

1: Dread Boon. An aura of dread fills a 15-foot Emanation originating from the priest. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each non-Undead creature that starts its turn in the Emanation. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn

2: Ectoplasmic Boon. Sticky ectoplasm slows creatures in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the priest. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature that starts its turn in the Emanation. *Failure:* The target's Speed is reduced by 10 feet until the start of its next turn.

3: Vampiric Boon. When the priest deals Necrotic damage to a creature, the priest gains Temporary Hit Points equal to the damage dealt.

4: Blazing Boon. The priest has a Fly Speed of 30 feet and Immunity to Fire damage.

5: Spectral Boon. The priest has Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage, and it has Vulnerability to Radiant damage. Additionally, the priest can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

6: Deathly Boon. When the priest revives with this boon, all corpses of Small or Medium Humanoids in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the priest rise as Skeletons under the priest's control. Additionally, at the end of each of the priest's turns, each non-Undead creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the priest takes 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage.

The priest dies and this trait doesn't function if the priest receives a boon it already has or the priest's tattoo of Osybus is destroyed. The tattoo is destroyed only if the priest takes 15 damage or more on a single turn while the priest has 0 Hit Points.

Tattoo of Osybus. If damage reduces the priest to 0 Hit Points, it receives a random boon. Roll 1d6 to determine the boon the priest receives. The priest revives at the start of its next turn with half its Hit Points, and its creature type is now Undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The priest makes two attacks, using Soul Blade or Necrotic Bolt in any combination.

Soul Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) Piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it has the Paralyzed condition

Relentless Killers

[+]

Pact-Bound Murderers

Relentless killers are fiend-twisted maniacs that arise from mortals who make pacts with nefarious forces. Such killers' powers vary depending on their obsessions and the source of their powers.

Clockwise from Front: Relentless Nightmare, Relentless Slasher, and Relentless Juggernaut

Andrey Kuzinskiy

Relentless Slasher

RHW p262

Medium Fiend, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+4 (14)	91 (14d8 + 28)	40 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	12	+1	+4	**Dex**	18	+4	+7	**Con**	14	+2	+5
Int	14	+2	+2	**Wis**	15	+2	+5	**Cha**	16	+3	+3

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Understands all but can't speak

Traits

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the slasher fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The slasher makes two Slasher's Knife attacks.

Slasher's Knife. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 30/60 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) Slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the relentless slasher can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The relentless slasher regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Homing Knife. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature within 120 feet that the slasher has hit with its Slasher's Knife attack within the last 24 hours. *Failure:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Slashing damage.

Vanishing Strike. The slasher makes one Slasher's Knife attack, then teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. The slasher can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

[+]

Loading "Relentless Nightmare"...

[+]

Loading "Relentless Juggernaut"...

[+]

Cursed Vampire Hunter

In better days, Rudolph van Richten lived with his wife, Ingrid, and son, Erasmus, in their family home outside Rivalis in the domain of Darkon. The brash doctor Rudolph ran afoul of the Radanaviches, a family of brigands disguised as Vistani travelers. When the doctor refused to treat one of the family's mortally ill members, the group's leader, Irena Radanavich, ordered her band to kidnap Rudolph's son. She then sold the young man to the vampire Baron Metus. Rudolph pursued the Radanaviches, shattered their criminal operation, and brought Irena to justice, but not before suffering her curse: "Live you always among monsters, and see everyone you love die beneath their claws."

By the time Rudolph tracked down his missing son, the curse had already taken hold: Erasmus had been transformed into Metus's vampire spawn. Rudolph put an end to his son's suffering by pounding a wooden stake through the youth's chest.

This violent deed begat more bloodshed: Baron Metus avenged his slain servant by killing Rudolph's wife, Ingrid. Though Rudolph eventually slew the evil baron, he remains haunted by the horror of his family's destruction.

Rudolph has committed himself to unmasking the evils lurking amid the Land of the Mists, hunting monsters, ending curses, and providing others with tools to do the same. His reputation and writings have spread among the domains. His published works, such as *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires* and *Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts*, have earned him both adherents and disdain among scholarly communities. Nevertheless, his good works have touched lives and earned him allies far and wide.

Rudolph lives in Mordentshire in the domain of Mordent. From his modest herbalist's shop, he corresponds with scholars and monster hunters across the domains, researches horrific creatures, and crafts tools to combat evil. Frequently he travels to other domains to conduct research or aid friends.

Over the years, Rudolph has adventured alongside heroes like monster hunter George Weathermay and detectives Alanik Ray and Arthur Sedgwick. A new generation of heroes, including Ez d'Avenir and Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, have learned from the doctor and continue his fight against evil.

Cynthia Sheppard

Rudolph van Richten

RHW p264

Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Good

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+2 (12)	105 (14d8 + 42)	30 ft.	5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	9	-1	-1	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	16	+3	+6
Int	17	+3	+3	**Wis**	18	+4	+7	**Cha**	15	+2	+2

Skills Arcana +6, Medicine +7, Perception +7, Religion +6, Sleight of Hand +5

Gear Hand Crossbow, Leather Armor

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

Traits

Shield of Erasmus. While Bloodied, Rudolph has Resistance to Force, Poison, and Psychic damage.

Actions

Multiattack. Rudolph makes three attacks, using Silver Sword Cane or Hand Crossbow in any combination.

Silver Sword Cane. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Slashing damage plus 5 (2d4) Radiant damage. Critical *Hit:* The target has the Poisoned condition until it finishes a Long Rest. It makes a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at end of each hour, ending the effect on a success.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 30/120 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) Radiant damage.

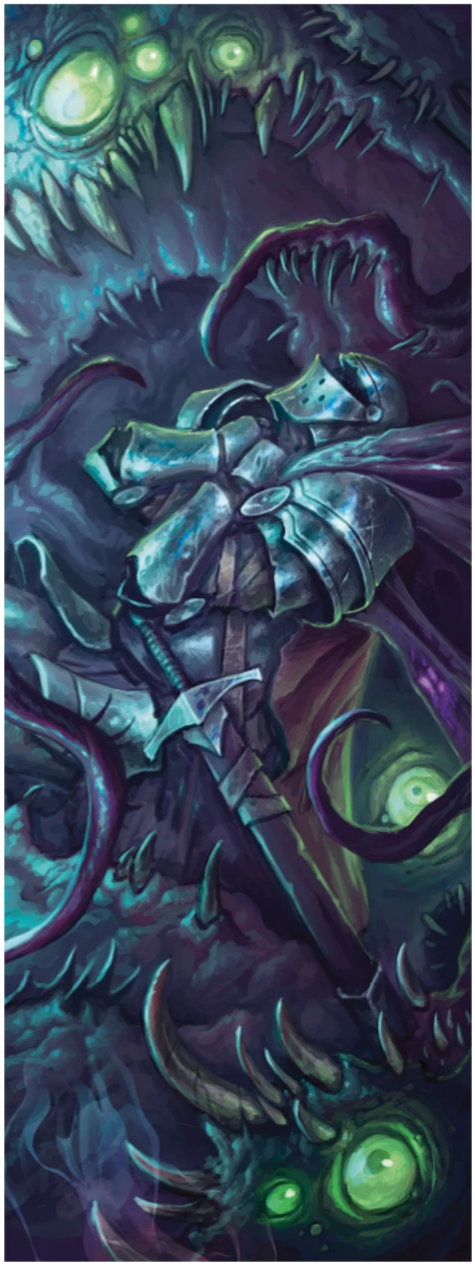
Repel Evil (Recharge 5–6). *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature of Rudolph's choice in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the end of Rudolph's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Occult Aid (2/Day). Rudolph casts Cure Wounds, Dispel Evil and Good, or Sanctuary, using Wisdom as the spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 15).

[+]

Loading "Shoggoth (Info)"...



Diana Franco

Shoggoth

RHW p266

Huge Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+7 (17)	172 (15d12 + 75)	30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.	11 (XP 7,200; PB +4)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+6	**Dex**	16	+3	+7	**Con**	21	+5	+9
Int	20	+5	+5	**Wis**	17	+3	+3	**Cha**	8	-1	-1

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Cold; Grappled, Prone, Restrained

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 60 ft.

Traits

Amphibious. The shoggoth can breathe air and water.

Mimicry. The shoggoth can mimic voices and animal sounds. A creature that hears this mimicry can tell it is an imitation only with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Susceptible to Charm. The shoggoth has Disadvantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Charmed condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The shoggoth makes three Pseudopod attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Suction Burst if available.

Pseudopod. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 11 (2d10) Thunder damage, and the creature has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of four pseudopods.

Suction Burst (Recharge 4–6). *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature Grappled by the shoggoth. *Failure:* 22 (4d10) Thunder damage, and the target is repelled from the shoggoth. The target no longer has the Grappled condition, is pushed up to 30 feet straight away from the shoggoth, and has the Deafened and Stunned conditions until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Reactions

Cold Sprint. *Trigger:* The shoggoth is subjected to Cold damage. *Response:* The shoggoth moves up to its Speed and can make one Pseudopod attack with Advantage.

[+]

Colossal, Shape-Shifting Alien Colonizers

Star spawn emissaries are the fingers of alien realms, digits that tip the scales of reality toward terror. Heralded by ominous astrological events, these ravenous invaders make worlds ready for their unimaginable masters. Employing two malleable forms, emissaries undermine perceptions of order, trust, and reality on global scales, readying worlds for sanity-shattering revelations and cascading apocalypses.

Star Spawn Emissary Lairs

A star spawn emissary's lair takes on macabre bodily features. A ruined watchtower might become a spire of pulsating flesh, or an abandoned mineshaft might transform into a maze of sticky, muscular innards.

Front to Back: Lesser Star Spawn Emissary and Greater Star Spawn Emissary

Antonio José Manzanedo

Lesser Star Spawn Emissary

RHW p267

Small or Medium Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
19	+10 (20)	241 (21d8 + 147)	40 ft., Fly 40 ft. (hover)	19 (XP 22,000, or 25,000 in lair; PB +6)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	21	+5	+5	**Dex**	18	+4	+4	**Con**	24	+7	+7
Int	25	+7	+13	**Wis**	20	+5	+11	**Cha**	23	+6	+12

Skills Arcana +19, Deception +18, Perception +11

Res. Acid, Force, Necrotic, Psychic

Imm. Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 21

Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in lair). If the emissary fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The emissary makes three attacks, using Lashing Maw or Invert Flesh in any combination.

Lashing Maw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) Piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) Acid damage.

Invert Flesh. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 21, one creature the emissary can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 29 (4d10 + 7) Force damage.

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. The emissary shape-shifts into a Small or Medium creature, or it returns to its true form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the lesser star spawn emissary can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The lesser star spawn emissary regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Teleporting Lash. The emissary teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see and makes one Lashing Maw attack.

Twist. The emissary uses Invert Flesh.

Greater Star Spawn Emissary

RHW p268

Huge Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+8 (18)	304 (21d12 + 168)	40 ft., Fly 40 ft. (hover)	21 (XP 33,000, or 41,000 in lair; PB +7)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	24	+7	+7	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	26	+8	+15
Int	27	+8	+15	**Wis**	22	+6	+13	**Cha**	25	+7	+14

Skills Arcana +22, Perception +13

Res. Acid, Force, Necrotic, Psychic

Imm. Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 23

Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Aberrant Restoration. If destroyed, the emissary revives with all its Hit Points in 1 day in the space of a Gibbering Mouther that was within 300 feet of the emissary when the emissary was destroyed; that mouther is destroyed.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Lair). If the emissary fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The emissary makes two attacks, using Lashing Maw or Coagulated Nodule in any combination. It can replace one attack with Unearthly Bile if available.

Lashing Maw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +14, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) Piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) Acid damage.

Coagulated Nodule. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +15, range 120 ft. *Hit:* 44 (8d8 + 8) Acid damage.

Unearthly Bile (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 23, each creature in a 30-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the emissary can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 54 (12d8) Acid damage, and a Gibbering Mouther appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the target. The mouthers take their turn immediately after the emissary on the same Initiative count. Each mouther fights until destroyed. *Success:* Half damage only.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the greater star spawn emissary can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The greater star spawn emissary regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Strahd Skeleton

[+]

Skeletal Soldier of the First Vampire

Vampires sometimes turn mortal servants unworthy of the gift of vampirism into skeletal soldiers. Known as Strahd skeletons—in recognition of the lord of Barovia who first created them—these silent, capable undead soldiers wield vampiric blades. Strahd skeletons that whet their blades in blood often carry their weapons back to their vampire lords. Tales disagree on whether vampires can feed from these bloody blades or merely revel in the sacrifice.

David Astruga

[+]

Loading "Strahd Skeleton"...

[+]

Loading "Strigoi (Info)"...

Jarel Threat

Strigoi

RHW p270

Medium Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+2 (12)	52 (7d8 + 21)	30 ft., Fly 40 ft.	4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	17	+3	+5	**Dex**	14	+2	+4	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	11	+0	+0	**Wis**	17	+3	+3	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4

Res. Necrotic

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Traits

Stirge Telepathy. The strigoi can magically control stirges within 120 feet of itself using a special telepathy.

Actions

Multiattack. The strigoi makes two Claw attacks and one Proboscis attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Slashing damage.

Proboscis. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and the strigoi regains Hit Points equal to that amount. A creature reduced to 0 Hit Points by this attack dies, leaving behind nothing except its skin and equipment.

Bonus Actions

Protective Swarm (Recharge 6). The strigoi summons a swarm of bloodthirsty mosquitoes in a 10-foot Emanation originating from itself, which lasts for 1 minute or until the strigoi's Concentration on it ends. Whenever the swarm enters a creature's space or a creature enters the swarm or ends its turn there, that creature is subjected to the following effect (a creature makes this save only once per turn, and strigoi and stirges are unaffected). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13. *Failure:* 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

[+]

Flesh-Eating Parasites

Few fates are more gruesome than falling victim to the parasitic or skeletonizing insect swarms that lurk in haunted sites and cursed dungeons.

Alexandre Honoré

Swarm of Infesting Insects

RHW p271

Medium swarm of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+2 (12)	33 (6d8 + 6)	20 ft., Climb 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.	2 (XP 450; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	3	-4	-4	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	1	-5	-5	**Wis**	7	-2	-2	**Cha**	1	-5	-5

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages —

Traits

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and it can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Actions

Infestation. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (4d4 + 2) Poison damage, or 7 (2d4 + 2) Poison damage if the swarm is Bloodied, and the target has the Poisoned condition. If the target remains Poisoned in this way after 1 hour, it is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 11. *Failure:* Roll 1d6: on a 1-2, the target has the Blinded condition; on a 3-4, the target's Hit Point maximum decreases by 5 (1d10); on a 5-6, the target gains 1 Exhaustion level. The effect lasts until the Poisoned condition ends. *Success:* The Poisoned condition ends.

Swarm of Ravenous Insects

RHW p271

Medium swarm of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+2 (12)	39 (6d8 + 12)	30 ft., Burrow 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	3	-4	-4	**Dex**	15	+2	+2	**Con**	14	+2	+2
Int	1	-5	-5	**Wis**	12	+1	+1	**Cha**	1	-5	-5

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages —

Traits

Skeletonize. If the swarm starts its turn in the same space as a Large or smaller corpse, the corpse is destroyed, leaving behind only what it was wearing or carrying.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Actions

Ravenous Bites. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) Piercing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied, and the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute as insects burrow inside it. The condition ends early if a spell or effect restores Hit Points to the target. While Poisoned, the target takes 4 (1d8) Piercing damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage dies.

Ulmist Inquisitors

[+]

Zealous Vanquishers of Evil Intent

"Evil lurks everywhere. With our minds, we will unearth it, we will plumb its depths, and we will annihilate it." With those words, the psychically gifted priest Ulmed founded the Ulmist Inquisition, an order of psionic inquisitors that seeks to uncover and extinguish the wickedness lurking deep in people's hearts. From the depraved city of Malitain on the Material Plane, the inquisition sends its members throughout the multiverse seeking to thwart the work of malevolent cults, reality-defying horrors, and the evil inherent to mortals. Sects of the inquisition exist within the Domains of Dread, working either in hidden cabals or infiltrating other faiths, such as the Church of Ezra.

The Ulmist Inquisition is organized into three orders named for Ulmed's companions: the Order of Cosima, the Order of Ansel, and the Order of Tristian. Each order specializes in a different psionic power, and each bears a different symbol on its coat of arms. Some inquisitors entertain friendly rivalries with their fellows from other orders, but most put aside their grudges—at least temporarily—to work together against evil.

Left to Right: Inquisitor of the Tome, Inquisitor of the Sword, and Inquisitor of the Mind Fire

Polar Engine

Ulmist Inquisitors

[+]

Zealous Vanquishers of Evil Intent

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Left to Right: Inquisitor of the Tome, Inquisitor of the Sword, and Inquisitor of the Mind Fire

Polar Engine

Inquisitor of the Mind Fire

RHW p272

Small or Medium Humanoid, Lawful Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+2 (12)	104 (16d8 + 32)	30 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	15	+2	+2
Int	17	+3	+6	**Wis**	16	+3	+6	**Cha**	21	+5	+8

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Gear Breastplate, Silvered Longsword

Senses Truesight 30 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common plus two other languages

Actions

Multiattack. The inquisitor makes three Silvered Longsword attacks or uses Mind Fire three times. It can replace one attack or one use of Mind Fire with a use of Spellcasting to cast Hold Monster if available.

Silvered Longsword. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the inquisitor's next turn. Critical *Hit:* If the target is a shape-shifted creature, it takes an additional 4 (1d8) Slashing damage.

Inquisitor's Command (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature of the inquisitor's choice that it can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Charmed condition until the start of the inquisitor's next turn. On the Charmed target's turn, the inquisitor can telepathically control the target's move and make the target take the Attack action (the inquisitor chooses the target), the Dash action, or no action.

Mind Fire. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the inquisitor can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the start of the inquisitor's next turn.

Spellcasting. The inquisitor casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16):

At will: Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Dispel Magic, Mage Hand (the hand is Invisible), Sending

1/day each: Hold Monster, Modify Memory

Inquisitor of the Sword

RHW p273

Small or Medium Humanoid, Lawful Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+2 (12)	120 (16d8 + 48)	30 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	12	+1	+1	**Dex**	14	+2	+2	**Con**	17	+3	+3
Int	15	+2	+5	**Wis**	18	+4	+7	**Cha**	16	+3	+6

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +7, Perception +7

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Gear Breastplate, Silvered Longsword

Senses Truesight 30 ft., Passive Perception 17

Languages Common plus two other languages

Traits

Metabolic Control. At the start of each of its turns, if the inquisitor has at least 1 Hit Point, it regains 10 Hit Points and can end one condition on itself.

Actions

Multiattack. The inquisitor makes three Silvered Longsword attacks.

Silvered Longsword. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Psychic damage. Critical *Hit:* If the target is a shape-shifted creature, it takes an additional 4 (1d8) Slashing damage. *Hit or Miss:* The inquisitor can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Spellcasting. The inquisitor casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

At will: Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Dispel Magic, Mage Hand (the hand is Invisible), Sending

1/day each: Dimension Door, Fly, Greater Invisibility

Inquisitor of the Tome

RHW p273

Small or Medium Humanoid, Lawful Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+1 (11)	88 (16d8 + 16)	30 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	12	+1	+1	**Con**	12	+1	+1
Int	19	+4	+7	**Wis**	16	+3	+6	**Cha**	15	+2	+5

Skills Arcana +10, History +7, Nature +7, Religion +10

Imm. Charmed, Frightened

Gear Longsword

Senses Truesight 30 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common plus two other languages

Actions

Multiattack. The inquisitor makes three Force Blade attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting to cast Otiluke's Resilient Sphere or Telekinesis if available.

Force Blade. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) Force damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is pushed up to 10 feet straight away from the inquisitor.

Spellcasting. The inquisitor casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

At will: Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Mage Armor (included in AC), Mage Hand (the hand is Invisible), Sending

1/day each: Otiluke's Resilient Sphere, Telekinesis

Bonus Actions

Implode (Recharge 4–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the inquisitor can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* 27 (6d8) Force damage, and the target has the Prone condition and is pulled up to 20 feet straight toward the Sphere's center. *Success:* Half damage only.

Unspeakable Horror

[+]

Terrifying Monster of the Mists

Unspeakable horrors are anathema to all other life in the multiverse. Their shapes change constantly in ways that defy and disrupt reality. Those who look on these beings instantly understand their absolute and awful wrongness. Such revelations are often the last witnesses have before they're dissolved by discordant, destructive forces.

Valera Lutfullina

Unspeakable Horror

RHW p274

Huge Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
13	+4 (14)	126 (12d12 + 48)	40 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	21	+5	+5	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	19	+4	+7
Int	3	-4	-4	**Wis**	14	+2	+5	**Cha**	17	+3	+3

Res. Acid, Cold, Necrotic, Poison

Imm. Frightened, Grappled, Prone, Restrained

Senses Truesight 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages —

Traits

Incomprehensible Form. Attack rolls against the horror have Disadvantage. This trait is suppressed while the horror has the Incapacitated condition.

Regeneration. The horror regains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of its turns if it has at least 1 Hit Point.

Terrifying Aura. The horror radiates an aura in a 15-foot Emanation while it doesn't have the Incapacitated condition. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, any enemy that starts its turn in the aura. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn. While Frightened in this way, the target has the Paralyzed condition. *Success:* The target is immune to this horror's aura for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The horror makes three Phantasmic Assault attacks.

Phantasmic Assault. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) Cold, Necrotic, Poison, or Psychic damage (horror's choice).

Reactions

Warp Mind. *Trigger:* A creature the horror can see within 120 feet of itself takes the Study action or makes a Constitution saving throw to maintain Concentration. *Response—Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, the triggering creature. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn.

[+]

Monstrous Life Drinkers

Horrific varieties of blood-drinking vampires spread their wickedness across the Domains of Dread.

Vampire Nosferatu

RHW p275

Small or Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+7 (17)	85 (9d8 + 45)	40 ft., Climb 40 ft.	8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	20	+5	+5	**Dex**	18	+4	+7	**Con**	21	+5	+8
Int	6	-2	-2	**Wis**	17	+3	+6	**Cha**	14	+2	+2

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +10

Res. Necrotic

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Common plus one other language

Traits

Blood Frenzy. The nosferatu has Advantage on attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its Hit Points.

Regeneration. The nosferatu regains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of its turns if it has at least 1 Hit Point. If the nosferatu takes Radiant damage, this trait doesn't function on the nosferatu's next turn.

Spider Climb. The nosferatu can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The nosferatu takes 20 Radiant damage if it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The nosferatu makes one Bite attack and two Claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and the nosferatu regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Slashing damage.

Blood Spew (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in a 15-foot Cone. *Failure:* 27 (6d8) Necrotic damage, and the creature can't regain Hit Points for 1 minute. *Success:* Half damage only.

Reactions

Bloodthirsty Slash. *Trigger:* A Bloodied creature the nosferatu can see within 40 feet takes damage. *Response:* The nosferatu moves up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks and makes a Claw attack against the triggering creature.

Vampire Mind Flayer

RHW p276

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
15	+4 (14)	85 (10d8 + 40)	30 ft., Climb 30 ft.	5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	18	+4	+7	**Con**	18	+4	+4
Int	5	-3	-3	**Wis**	15	+2	+5	**Cha**	18	+4	+7

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +7

Res. Necrotic, Psychic

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Understands Deep Speech but can't speak

Traits

Spider Climb. The mind flayer can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The mind flayer takes 20 Radiant damage if it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The mind flayer makes two Claw attacks, or one Claw attack and one Tentacles attack, and uses Mind Burst if available.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14).

Drink Sapience. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature the mind flayer has Grappled. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Psychic damage, and the creature gains 1 Exhaustion level. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Psychic damage taken, and the mind flayer regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Mind Burst (Recharge 5–6). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the mind flayer. *Failure:* The target has the Incapacitated condition and repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

Waxwork

[+]

Murderous Wax Replacement

Realistic humanoid sculptures come to life, waxworks seek to kill and replace those they've been crafted to resemble. These creatures typically believe they're the original living beings rather than duplicates. Any waxwork confronted with evidence of its true nature flies into a rage until it or its double is destroyed.

In rare cases, a waxwork might live as if it were a person. Such individuals are typically callous and vain. Some seek to create more waxworks to replace more people.

Bokun An

Waxwork

RHW p277

Small or Medium Construct, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+1 (11)	52 (7d8 + 21)	30 ft.	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	17	+3	+3	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	16	+3	+3
Int	1	-5	-5	**Wis**	10	+0	+0	**Cha**	1	-5	-5

Vuln. Fire

Res. Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Imm. Poison, Psychic; Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Stunned, Unconscious

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Common but can't speak

Traits

Meltable. If the waxwork takes Fire damage, until the end of its next turn, its Speed decreases by 20 feet and it has Disadvantage on saving throws.

Actions

Multiattack. The waxwork makes two Sculpting Knife attacks.

Sculpting Knife. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Slashing damage.

Wax Lob. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) Bludgeoning damage, and the target's Speed decreases by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. The waxwork shape-shifts into a humanoid of its size, or it returns to its true form. Its game statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

Weathermay-Foxgrove Twins

[+]

Adventurous Paranormal Investigators

Twins Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove are monster hunters who've built a reputation as heroes in the domain of Mordent, and their reputation is spreading in domains beyond. The daughters of the mayor of Mordentshire, Alice Weathermay, the twins can often be found at their home, Heather House, or at that of their adopted uncle, Doctor Rudolph van Richten.

In their youth, Gennifer and Laurie channeled their curiosity and propensity for troublemaking into solving local mysteries. The twins' uncle—renowned monster hunter George Weathermay—returned to Mordent with his fiancée, Natalia Vhorishkova, just before the twins' sixteenth birthday. The twins realized Natalia was manipulating their beloved uncle and eventually exposed her as a werewolf who was using George to pursue Rudolph van Richten. After the twins saved their uncle and the doctor from the werewolf, George and Rudolph encouraged the girls' investigative instincts by training them as monster hunters.

Ever since, Gennifer and Laurie have aided Rudolph in his research and on adventurers across the Land of the Mists. Increasingly, the twins have struck out on their own, allying with heroes such as Ez d'Avenir and Savra Sunstar to solve mysteries and hunt evil across domains.

[+]

Loading "Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove"...

Polar Engine

Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove

RHW p279

Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Good

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
16	+1 (11)	65 (10d8 + 20)	30 ft.	3 (XP 700; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	17	+3	+3	**Dex**	13	+1	+1	**Con**	15	+2	+2
Int	10	+0	+0	**Wis**	14	+2	+2	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +5, Investigation +2, Perception +4

Gear Chain Mail, Gossamer (+1 Longsword)

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish

Actions

Multiattack. Laurie makes two attacks, using Gossamer or Light Crossbow in any combination.

Gossamer. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) Radiant damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +3, range 80/320 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Radiant damage.

Reactions

Deflect Blow. *Trigger:* An attack roll hits Laurie or a creature she can see within 5 feet. *Response:* The triggering attack's damage is reduced by 5 (1d10).

[+]

Ominous Shape-Shifter

Wereravens are secretive, cautious lycanthropes that seek to blend into society and subtly combat evil. To avoid the claws of the wicked forces that oppose them, and to protect those they hold dear, wereravens hide their identities and rarely reveal their hybrid forms. Nevertheless, folktales persist of eerie, raven-winged figures who appear prior to disasters, share mysterious prophecies, and aid hapless victims. Such stories are true in a way, as evil hunts wereravens wherever they go.

Because evil frequently travels in packs, wereravens flock together to battle such threats. They congregate in hard-to-reach aeries within or just outside urban settlements, such as atop bell towers, lighthouses, or ancient trees. Wereraven groups tend to be loosely organized, since members understand the importance of anonymity.

The Keepers of the Feather) is one example of a secret society of evil-opposing wereravens.

Rowan Holloway

Wereraven

RHW p280

Small or Medium Monstrosity (Lycanthrope), Neutral Good

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+2 (12)	54 (12d8)	30 ft., Fly 50 ft. (raven or hybrid form only)	2 (XP 450; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	**Dex**	15	+2	+2	**Con**	11	+0	+0
Int	13	+1	+1	**Wis**	15	+2	+2	**Cha**	14	+2	+2

Skills Insight +4, Perception +6

Gear Shortbow

Senses Passive Perception 16

Languages Common plus one other language

Traits

Mimicry. The wereraven can mimic voices and animal sounds. A creature that hears this mimicry can tell it is an imitation only with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Multiattack. The wereraven makes two attacks, using Scratch or Shortbow in any combination. It can replace one attack with a Beak attack.

Beak (Raven or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) Piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it is subjected to the following effect. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 10. *Failure:* The target is cursed. If the cursed target drops to 0 Hit Points, it instead becomes a Wereraven under the DM's control and has 10 Hit Points. *Success:* The target is immune to this wereraven's curse for 24 hours.

Scratch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) Slashing damage.

Shortbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 80/320 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) Piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Shape-Shift. The wereraven shape-shifts into a Medium raven-humanoid hybrid or a Small raven, or it returns to its true humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

[+]

Fungous Alien Body Swapper

Yithians are cosmos-traveling scholars with distinctive, conical bodies and four limbs that end in pincers, sensory structures, and flute-like communication organs. They search for secrets to add to their vast libraries, conducting research by swapping minds with the inhabitants of other worlds—sometimes indefinitely. When a yithian swaps minds with a creature, it traps its victim's mind in the yithian's body, which it teleports to its unfathomable, alien home world.

Romain Kurdi

Yithian

RHW p281

Large Aberration, Chaotic Neutral

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
14	+5 (15)	180 (19d10 + 76)	30 ft.	15 (XP 13,000; PB +5)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	18	+4	+4	**Dex**	10	+0	+0	**Con**	18	+4	+9
Int	21	+5	+10	**Wis**	18	+4	+4	**Cha**	19	+4	+4

Imm. Psychic; Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 120 ft.

Traits

Magic Resistance. The yithian has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Shielded Mind. The yithian's thoughts can't be read by any means, and other creatures can communicate with it telepathically only if it allows them.

Actions

Multiattack. The yithian makes three Pincer attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Sup.

Pincer. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) Piercing damage and the creature has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14).

Sup. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature within 10 feet that has the Grappled, Incapacitated, or Restrained condition. *Failure:* 15 (3d6 + 5) Psychic damage. The target's Hit Points maximum decreases by an amount equal to the damage taken, and the yithian regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Bonus Actions

Eldritch Magic (2/Day). The yithian casts Clairvoyance, Modify Memory, Phantasmal Killer, or Transport via Plants, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18).

Mind Swap (Recharge 6). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 18, one Humanoid the yithian can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* The target is possessed by the yithian; the yithian disappears, and the target has the Incapacitated condition and loses control of its body. The yithian now controls the body; the target has no awareness of the yithian's actions. The yithian can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect. The yithian's game statistics are the same, except it uses the possessed target's Speed and Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution modifiers. It knows everything the target knew.

Zombies

[+]

Relentless Reanimated Corpses

The zombies of Ravenloft come in many monstrous forms. These Undead horrors befoul and beleaguer any living thing in their way.

Hinchel Or

[+]

Loading "Swarm of Zombie Limbs"...

Zombie Plague Spreader

RHW p283

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
10	+0 (10)	78 (12d8 + 24)	30 ft.	4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	16	+3	+3	**Dex**	10	+0	+0	**Con**	15	+2	+2
Int	3	-4	-4	**Wis**	5	-3	-3	**Cha**	5	-3	-3

Res. Necrotic

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 7

Languages Understands Common plus one other language but can't speak

Traits

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 Hit Points, it makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 5 plus the damage taken) unless the damage is Radiant or from a Critical Hit. On a successful save, the zombie drops to 1 Hit Point instead.

Viral Aura. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, any creature that starts its turn in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the zombie. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn. While Poisoned, the target can't regain Hit Points. *Success:* The creature is immune to this zombie's Viral Aura for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) Necrotic damage.

Virulent Miasma (1/Day). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the zombie. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Poison damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* If this damage reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, it dies and rises 1 minute later as a Zombie.

Zombie Clot

RHW p283

Huge Undead, Neutral Evil

AC	Init.	HP	Speed	CR
12	+0 (10)	104 (11d12 + 33)	40 ft.	6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	20	+5	+5	**Dex**	10	+0	+0	**Con**	16	+3	+6
Int	3	-4	-4	**Wis**	8	-1	-1	**Cha**	10	+0	+0

Imm. Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Stunned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages Understands Common plus one other language but can't speak

Traits

Deathly Stench. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 14, any creature that starts its turn in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the zombie. *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Poison damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 Hit Points, it makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 5 plus the damage taken) unless the damage is Radiant or from a Critical Hit. On a successful save, the zombie drops to 1 Hit Point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) Bludgeoning damage.

Flesh Entomb (Recharge 5–6). *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the zombie can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 16 (3d10) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is entombed in a pile of dead flesh. While entombed, the target has the Restrained condition, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the dead flesh, and takes 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.

The target can be freed if the dead flesh is destroyed (AC 10; HP 25; Immunity to Necrotic, Poison, and Psychic damage).

Appendix: Tarokka Deck

Tarokka fortune-telling cards originated among Vistani, who created these cards to guide their travels. Since Vistani entered the Mists, their cards have spread and gained renown as tools for divining the future and charting paths between the Domains of Dread. Now, diviners across many lands seek glimpses of what's to come and answers to unknowable questions from the tarokka. Such diviners have a saying: "No secret is safe from the tarokka."

The tarokka deck is a prop for creating mood-rich fortune-telling scenes in your adventures. It features prominently in the adventure Curse of Strahd, but you can use it to influence adventures of your own design as well.

Pam Wishbow

Pam Wishbow

Composition

A tarokka deck has fifty-four cards, each of which has its own name. Forty of them compose the common deck, which is divided into four suits: coins, glyphs, stars, and swords.

Each suit contains cards numbered one through nine, plus a tenth card called the master of that suit. One can refer to a card by its suit designation or by its name. For instance, the six of stars is also known as the evoker, and the master of coins is the rogue.

The remaining fourteen cards make up the high deck and symbolize powerful and enigmatic forces.

All cards in the tarokka deck and what they represent are detailed at the end of this appendix.

High Deck

The cards that make up the high deck aren't considered one suit, although they all have a crown icon to mark their importance. Each card represents an important power. If one of these cards appears during a reading and contradicts the prediction of an earlier card, Vistani always assume this card takes precedence.

Common Deck

The four suits of the common deck are described below.

Coins

The suit of coins symbolizes desire for personal and material gain. It also represents gluttony, lust, and obsession. On the side of good, this suit can suggest the accumulation of wealth to benefit a charity or a just cause. On the side of evil, it embodies the worst aspects of greed.

Glyphs

The suit of glyphs symbolizes faith, spirituality, and inner strength. It is the suit of priests and those who devote themselves to the service of a deity, a higher power, or a heightened philosophy. It symbolizes health and healing, as well as illness and disease. On the side of good, this suit represents willpower and dedication. On the side of evil, it signifies weakness of character, self-doubt, and betrayal of one's ideals or beliefs.

Stars

The suit of stars symbolizes the desire for personal power and control over things beyond mortal ken. It is the suit of mages, sages, and intellectuals. It also represents the triumph of magic, science, and reason over religion, mysticism, and superstition.

Swords

The suit of swords symbolizes aggression and violence. It is the suit of warriors, be they paladins, soldiers, or mercenaries. It also symbolizes the power of governments and leaders, whether noble or corrupt.

Prop Tarokka Decks

Tarokka decks for use in your game are available separately, with each card featuring imagery to aid you in creating portentous fortunes. If you don't have a tarokka deck, you can use a regular deck of playing cards instead. To do so, separate the numbered cards from the face cards and jokers, and treat them as two separate decks: the common deck (the numbered cards) and the high deck (the face cards and jokers).

Common Deck. Each suit in a regular deck of playing cards corresponds to a suit in the tarokka deck.

Hearts = Glyphs	Diamonds = Coins
Spades = Swords	Clubs = Stars

An ace represents a one in the tarokka deck, while a ten in a regular deck represents a master card in the tarokka deck.

High Deck. Each jack, queen, king, and joker corresponds to a card in the tarokka high deck.

Playing Card	Tarokka Card
King of hearts	Ghost
Queen of hearts	Innocent
Jack of hearts	Marionette
King of spades	Darklord
Queen of spades	Mists
Jack of spades	Executioner
King of diamonds	Broken One
Queen of diamonds	Tempter
Jack of diamonds	Beast
King of clubs	Donjon
Queen of clubs	Raven
Jack of clubs	Seer
Joker 1	Artifact
Joker 2	Horseman

Tarokka Readings

Tarokka decks aid fortune tellers in revealing information about specific individuals. The focus of a tarokka reading might be the individual having their fortune told or someone else. A fortune teller randomly selects or invites another to choose what tarokka card best represents the focus of the reading. To begin the tarokka reading, this card is laid face up in position 1 in the pattern below.

The fortune teller then draws four additional cards, laying one face down in each of the other numbered positions in the pattern. These positions each represent something about the focus:

Position 1. The focus of the reading and the lens through which the other cards are interpreted

Position 2. The past, something that might or might not be apparent to those other than the focus

Position 3. What opposes the focus, whether literal opponents or obstructing fortunes

Position 4. The future, an omen of what's to come and a fate that might still be changed

Position 5. What aids the focus, whether literal allies or advantageous events

The reading proceeds with the fortune teller revealing the significance of each card's position and what the card represents, as guided by the descriptions later in this appendix. After a card is interpreted, the card in the next position is revealed. This continues until all five cards have been interpreted. The fortune teller might reveal more details (see the following section) or claim that the cards remain silent on certain points. The fortune teller and characters then might speculate about the reading's broader meanings. Once you're satisfied with what's revealed, the reading ends.

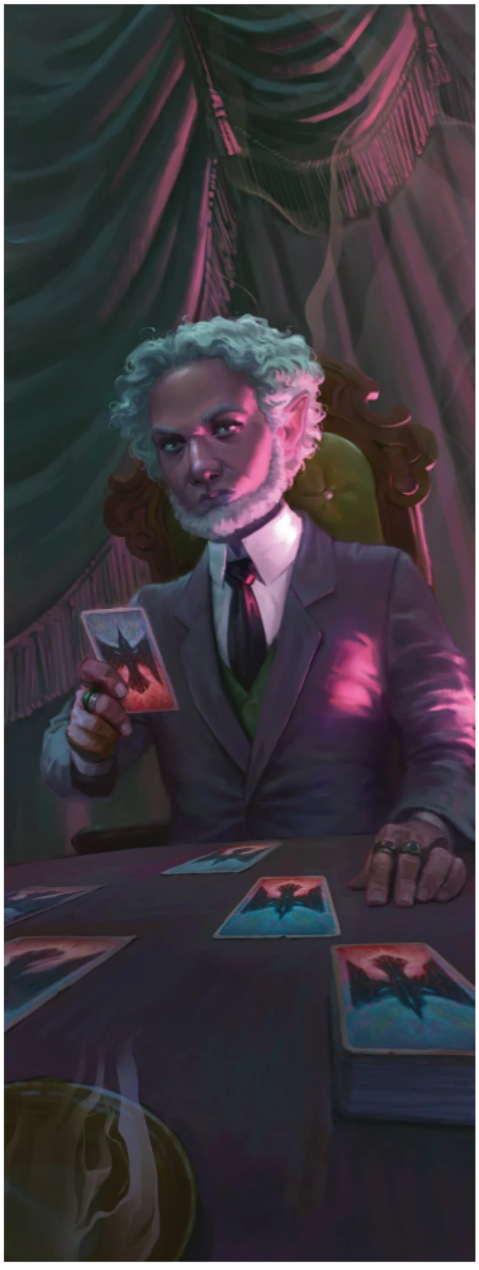
Tarokka Techniques

The tarokka deck is a prop for inspiring adventures and creating dramatic fortune-telling scenes. Through a mix of creative interpretation and card manipulation, a DM can influence what the tarokka reveals and the accuracy of its revelations. Consider the following techniques during tarokka readings.

Stacking the Deck

You can use sleight of hand tricks to ensure tarokka cards appear where you desire during a reading. Select the desired cards before the tarokka reading and put them in the order you want to draw them so you can produce them effortlessly and place them in the desired positions. Cards might be stacked on the top of the deck or drawn from the bottom. Stacking the deck is useful for ensuring specific results or creating patterns that appear repeatedly between readings. Avoid letting players notice you're stacking the deck, as it undermines the mystery of that and future tarokka readings.

Dramatic Interpretations



Orphir Brindletop, a member of the Keepers of the Feather, consults the tarokka

Irina Nordsol

When interpreting tarokka cards, you can elaborate on the card descriptions in this appendix, reframing those details and adjusting them to better suit your adventure. Use these techniques to add onto and adjust the meanings of tarokka cards:

Broad Interpretation. Highlight broader card details, like the meanings of suits and the generalities they encompass, over card specifics.

Card Imagery. Focus on specifics in a card's art, like the numbers of objects or the positions of figures, to suggest a deeper meaning.

Contextual Meanings. Suggest that multiple cards of the same suit or in specific relation to one another have greater or lesser meaning.

Diviner Experience. Reveal that a card arrangement has a specific meaning, or that the fortune teller has seen it in an ominous instance before.

Foreshadowing. Highlight details that align with impending events of which only you are aware.

Leading Questions. Have a fortune teller ask questions that lead characters to connect the reading with past events or their existing knowledge.

Manipulating Fate

You control fate in your adventures. If you don't know what a tarokka card means during a reading, note that and fulfill its prophecy in the future. For example, if the four of glyphs appears in a reading, its imagery might appear later as a shepherd NPC, a hooked staff, a wandering sheep, four runes, or the like. You can then tell the players about the connection between the image and the reading.

Additionally, listen in on players' speculations about the meaning of tarokka readings, then use those suggestions to influence future revelations in your adventures.

High Deck

Name	Meaning
Artifact	The importance of some physical object that must be obtained, protected, or destroyed at all costs
Beast	Great rage or passion; something bestial or malevolent hiding in plain sight or lurking just below the surface
Broken One	Defeat, failure, and despair; the loss of something or someone important, without which one feels incomplete
Darklord	A powerful evil individual; one whose goals have enormous and far-reaching consequences
Donjon	Isolation and imprisonment; a prisoner of their own beliefs
Ghost	The looming past; the return of an old enemy or the discovery of a secret buried long ago
Executioner	The imminent death of one rightly or wrongly convicted of a crime; false accusations and unjust prosecution
Horseman	Death; disastrous loss of wealth or property, a horrible defeat, or the end of a bloodline
Innocent	A being of great importance whose life is in danger (who might be helpless or simply unaware of the peril)
Marionette	The presence of a spy or a minion of some greater power; an encounter with a puppet or an underling
Mists	Something unexpected or mysterious that can't be avoided; a great quest or journey that will try one's spirit
Raven	A hidden source of information; a fortunate turn of events; a secret potential for good
Seer	Inspiration and keen intellect; a future event, the outcome of which will hinge on a clever mind
Tempter	One who has been compromised or led astray by temptation or foolishness; one who tempts others for evil ends

Swords

Card	Name	Meaning
Master of swords	Warrior	Strength and force personified; violence; those who use force to accomplish their goals
One of swords	Avenger	Justice and revenge for great wrongs; those on a quest to rid the world of great evil
Two of swords	Paladin	Just and noble warriors; those who live by a code of honor and integrity
Three of swords	Soldier	War and sacrifice; the stamina to endure great hardship
Four of swords	Mercenary	Inner strength and fortitude; those who fight for power or wealth
Five of swords	Myrmidon	Great heroes; a sudden reversal of fate; the triumph of the underdog over a mighty enemy
Six of swords	Berserker	The brutal and barbaric side of warfare; bloodlust; those with a bestial nature
Seven of swords	Hooded One	Bigotry, intolerance, and xenophobia; a mysterious presence or newcomer
Eight of swords	Dictator	All that is wrong with leadership; those who rule through fear and violence
Nine of swords	Torturer	The coming of suffering or merciless cruelty; one who is irredeemably evil or sadistic

Stars

Card	Name	Meaning
Master of stars	Wizard	Mystery and riddles; the unknown; those who crave magical power and great knowledge
One of stars	Transmuter	A new discovery; the coming of unexpected things; unforeseen consequences and chaos
Two of stars	Diviner	The pursuit of knowledge tempered by wisdom; truth and honesty; sages and prophecy
Three of stars	Enchanter	Inner turmoil that comes from confusion, fear of failure, or false information
Four of stars	Abjurer	Those guided by logic and reasoning; warnings of an overlooked clue or piece of information
Five of stars	Elementalist	The triumph of nature over civilization; natural disasters and bountiful harvests
Six of stars	Evoker	Magical or supernatural power that can't be controlled; magic for destructive ends
Seven of stars	Illusionist	Lies and deceit; grand conspiracies; secret societies; the presence of a dupe or a saboteur
Eight of stars	Necromancer	Unnatural events and unhealthy obsessions; those who follow a destructive path
Nine of stars	Conjurer	The coming of an unexpected supernatural threat; those who think of themselves as gods

Coins

Card	Name	Meaning
Master of coins	Rogue	Anyone for whom money is important; those who believe money is the key to their success
One of coins	Swashbuckler	Those who like money yet give it up freely; likable rogues and rapscallions
Two of coins	Philanthropist	Charity and giving on a grand scale; those who use wealth to fight evil and sickness
Three of coins	Trader	Commerce; smuggling and black markets; fair and equitable trades
Four of coins	Merchant	A rare commodity or business opportunity; deceitful or dangerous business transactions
Five of coins	Guild Member	Like-minded individuals joined together in a common goal; pride in one's work
Six of coins	Beggar	Sudden change in economic status or fortune
Seven of coins	Thief	Those who steal or burgle; loss of property, beauty, innocence, friendship, or reputation
Eight of coins	Tax Collector	Corruption; honesty in an otherwise corrupt government or organization
Nine of coins	Miser	Hoarded wealth; those who are irreversibly unhappy or think money is meaningless

Glyphs

Card	Name	Meaning
Master of glyphs	Priest	Enlightenment; those who follow a deity, a system of values, or a higher purpose

Card	Name	Meaning
One of glyphs	Monk	Serenity; inner strength and self-reliance; supreme confidence bereft of arrogance
Two of glyphs	Missionary	Those who spread wisdom to others; warnings of the spread of fear and ignorance
Three of glyphs	Healer	Healing; a contagious illness, disease, or curse; those who practice the healing arts
Four of glyphs	Shepherd	Those who protect others; one who bears a burden far too great to be shouldered alone
Five of glyphs	Druid	The ambivalence and cruelty of nature and those who feel drawn to it; inner turmoil
Six of glyphs	Anarchist	A fundamental change brought on by one whose beliefs are being put to the test
Seven of glyphs	Charlatan	Liars; those who profess to believe one thing but actually believe another
Eight of glyphs	Bishop	Strict adherence to a code or a belief; those who plot, plan, and scheme
Nine of glyphs	Traitor	Betrayal by someone close and trusted; a weakening or loss of faith